



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
December 4 – 10, 2015

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Aboriginal Arts & Culture

Robbie Robertson Talks Native American Heritage, New Children's Book

"You can't just publish something like this," says Band songwriter of illustrated book telling Hiawatha story. "You have to go to the elders and get their blessing"

By [Sarah Grant](#) December 4, 2015



Robbie Robertson's second children's book, 'Hiawatha and the Peacemaker,' is based on a sacred Native American story. David Jordan Williams

[Robbie Robertson](#) is spending his golden years holed up and writing feverishly. It's the only way he's ever been able to work, he said in a phone conversation with *Rolling Stone*. The legendary guitarist and songwriter of the [Band](#) is secluding himself in order to finalize the first volume of his autobiography, a lofty project that stemmed from a substantial 850-page handwritten draft chronicling events in his life only up until 1976. "I have a strong memory for details," he laughed. "I'm just reliving everything. Some of it has been extraordinary and some of it has been quite painful."

Robertson handles his formidable project schedule with the composure of a gymnast on a balance beam. He's eager to multitask, even though he sighs about being sorely overbooked. But revisiting his early years has been an unexpected boon. In September, Robertson published his second children's book with Caldecott-winning illustrator David Shannon, [*Hiawatha and the Peacemaker*](#). It's based on a sacred Native American story Robertson first heard over 60 years ago on the Six Nations of the Grand River reservation in southern Ontario where his mother's family lived.

The story of Hiawatha, a tale about faith and the birth of democracy in the Indian nations, had a profound effect on Robertson's musical and literary path. "There was something about the elder who told the story," said Robertson. "It gave me chills. I remember after that experience saying to my mom, 'I hope when I grow up, I can do something like that.'"

Robertson, who comes from Mohawk and Cayuga descent, began showcasing his heritage musically in 1994 with a Native American group called the Red Road Ensemble. Ever since, his native roots have been a source of constant vitality for the prolific musician. He spoke to *RS* about how those early experiences shaped him as an individual and a musician.

Tell me what it was like to go with your mother to Six Nations. What was most surprising to you about their way of life?

When we would go I thought, "Wow, these people have it made." They knew if it was going to rain tomorrow. They could run up a tree. I had cousins that could snap off a branch and turn it into a beautiful spear. They didn't have any entertainment coming though on the res, so they made their own. Everyone sang or danced. I was about 12 or 13 and thought — I wouldn't mind getting my hands on a guitar.



"When we would go I thought, 'Wow, these people have it made,'" says Robertson of visiting a Native American reservation in his youth. David Jordan Williams

Not too long after that, you would drop out of high school to play music professionally.

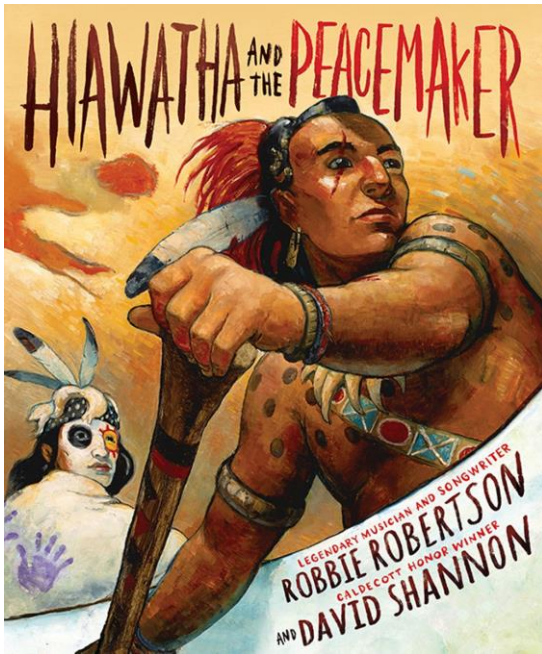
With a promise to my mom that I would go back to school. But I found another education.

You were learning to play guitar on the reservation in the 1950s. Was there any interest in popular music there?

These people lived in the country, and so they sang a lot of country. I remember thinking it was wild to see Indians singing cowboy songs. It was just kind of an oxymoron in a way. I had a guitar my parents gave me that had a picture of a cowboy on it, and I was embarrassed to bring it to the reservation. But nobody cared. They would sing Lefty Frizzell songs beautifully. I remember listening to music by Marvin Rainwater, a country singer who is part Cherokee. It just made you think there are really no boundaries.

What about reservation life made a specific impression on you?

One of the things I recognized early on, that harkens back to earlier days, is that they have such a respect for the gift, the Creator, for all the beautiful things in life. One time I was walking with one of my cousins by the Grand River, on the reservation, and I found in my pocket a little piece of gum. I took the wrapper just like if I was in the city and threw it in the water. Everyone stopped. They weren't chastising me, but telling me with passion, you know, this is where we bathe; this is our connection to the earth. They gave me such a speech that I never did that again in my life.



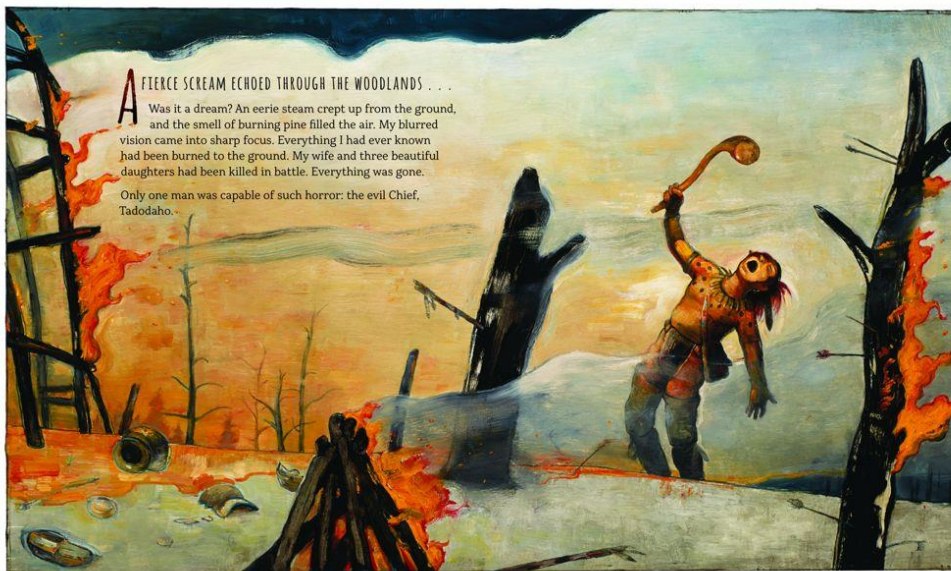
I was surprised that I'd never heard the story of Hiawatha and the Peacemaker like this before. You write in the postscript that it was an influence on the authors of the United States Constitution.

The story isn't a secret, but it's not as well known because a lot of people, especially white people, think of Hiawatha as being the character in a Longfellow poem. Longfellow just got him mixed up with another figure and he didn't know the story about the Peacemaker. Hiawatha is sort of like the equivalent of the Dalai Lama, a real person

that you wouldn't call by his real name. Before Hiawatha came along, war was all Indian nations ever knew. With the help of the Peacemaker, he brought the great law of peace, which has been abided for the last 500 years.

The story's villain, Tadodaho, is depicted as a brutal killer. But he is ultimately forgiven after all of these terrible acts of war. What was your approach to humanizing such a character for children?

I didn't compromise at all in the story. The character Tadodaho really struck me when I first heard the story. It was a bit scary. I wanted to show just how much of an evil badass he was, how he wore snakes in his hair. There were some elders I had been in touch with that consulted me on how to tell the story. You know, you can't just publish something like this. You have to go to the elders and get their blessing. That's why there isn't a tremendous amount of literature out there already and people don't know this famous story — probably why you'd never heard it before.



What was the process of asking for a blessing from the Native American community?

It's a huge responsibility. I went through a similar thing when I wrote a song called "The Code of Handsome Lake." A man named Chief Jake Thomas would recite the Code of Handsome Lake every year as a reminder — it's a story of alcoholism — this Indian was dying from alcoholism and the only way out of his disease was to go and help other people with their problems. Chief Thomas gave me his blessings and contributed to the song by reciting the code on the recording. He's passed away now, but he was an expert in the story of the Peacemaker.

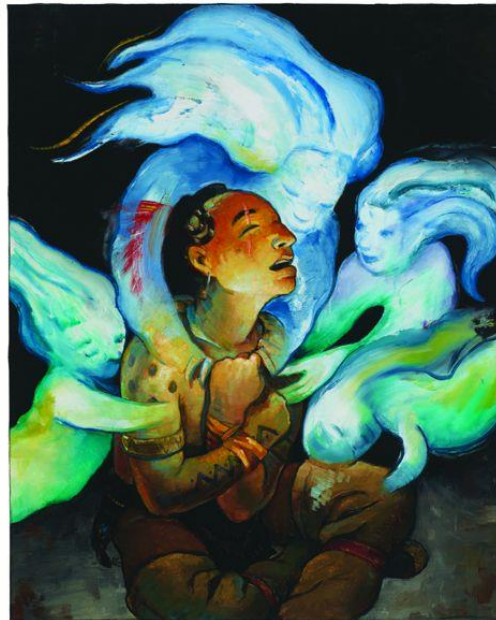
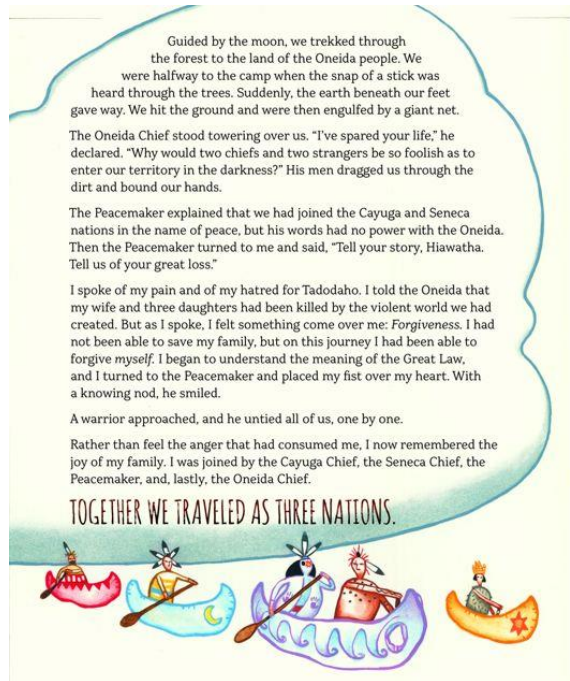
Who did you consult about Hiawatha after Chief Thomas passed away?

Another woman, actually the first woman chief of Six Nations named Chief Roberta Jamieson. She's someone I'm in touch with now and we just made arrangements with Abrams Books and Indigo's Chapters to contribute 4,000 of my books to Indian nations

throughout the country. That makes my day.

What kind of reaction did you get when sharing the story of Hiawatha with your own grandchildren?

I was waiting until my grandkids were old enough that you could talk about something like this story. There is real grownup violence and sadness, so I was trying not to impose anything too harsh on them. But my oldest grandkid, Donovan, is 10 years old now, and was born on my birthday — kind of a wonderful birthday present. He's read the story and it's made some kind of an impression.



What contemporary novels have impacted you recently?

I'm in the process of finishing up volume one of my autobiography, so I've been kind of shut off from anything else. When I'm deep in the creative process, I go to a place of solitude. I'm not influenced by anything, so I'm not walking on anyone else's grass. But I recently read *Hitch-22*, Christopher Hitchens' memoir. He's such a wordsmith. And I have a book sitting here by an American Indian author, Sherman Alexie, *War Dances*. I'll get to that as soon as I get through the woods.

Was there a time you felt like you could tell your mother that you'd made good on your declaration to become a storyteller?

I didn't have to tell her that. But a couple of times I heard her singing "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down" to herself in the kitchen. I think she was proud of introducing me to the things that inspired me.

Read more: <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/robbie-robertson-talks-native-american-heritage-new-childrens-book-20151204#ixzz3tfkMDiRr>

Inuit broadcast centre reclaims the past, steps into the future

“It's about time that IBC has its own building”

STEVE DUCHARME, December 04, 2015 - 4:00 pm



IBC archivist Loretta Kanatsiak surrounded by boxes full of old analog video recordings that she will digitize one tape at a time. (PHOTO BY STEVE DUCHARME)



IBC's new media arts centre, located off the Federal Rd. in Iqaluit. (PHOTO BY STEVE DUCHARME)



Johnny the Travelling Lemming, whose head is just poking above the table, talks to reporters Dec. 4 at the opening of IBC's media arts centre in Iqaluit. (PHOTO BY STEVE DUCHARME)

For the Inuit Broadcasting Corp., its newly completed Nunavut Media Arts Centre is a step into the future — and a reclamation of the past.

That much was apparent at a Dec. 2 open house at the IBC's new \$8.6 million building tucked away on Federal Rd. near Iqaluit's downtown core.

"It's about time that IBC has its own building and it is something that will benefit not just IBC itself but Nunavummiut, because we can now say we own our own media in Nunavut," said Paul Quassa, Nunavut's education minister.

Quassa frequently hosted and produced IBC programs in the 1980s and 1990s.

"We used to do live programming, and now they have their own centre that should become more accessible. IBC was originally made to ensure our language survived and I certainly think this will enhance that," Quassa said.

"As I recalled working for IBC as a director before becoming MLA, it was very rewarding to be part of the corporation," said Monica Ell-Kanayuk, the minister of economic development, after a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The new building is equipped with state-of-the-art video and audio editing suites, a new sound stage, and a digital server farm that will store decades of IBC programming.

And the process of transferring and archiving all that historic footage may be what defines the first few years of IBC's occupation of their new building.

That's because hidden away in the attic-like top floor are rows and rows of boxes storing IBC's videotape legacy.

"There are thousands and thousands of tapes up here," IBC production manager Catherine Carry said.

"A lot of those video tapes were done in the early seventies on pneumatic tapes. They're already deteriorating. We're losing about five per cent [on every tape]."

The IBC began the process of digitizing their tapes a few years ago and have digitized about 2,500 video files so far, Carry said.

It costs about \$54 dollars to properly digitize and archive one tape. Some of that work is being done in Ottawa.

As for the tapes that remain in Nunavut, the task of transferring these will fall on archivist Loretta Kanatsiak.

Old tape formats, such as Betamax or 3/4-inch cassettes, will first have to be transferred into the more modern DV format.

That process — the most time-consuming — is a lot like making a copy of an audiocassette on an old stereo.

The DV format can then be transferred onto a computer hard drive.

Kanatsiak estimates it will take years to get through all the tapes.

“I’m putting in two days to concentrate on digitizing and on the other days I’ll be working on something else,” she said.

A digitization program will eventually be created to help Kanatsiak with the process.

Though [donations from private businesses](#) as well as organizations such as Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, construction of the Nunavut Media Arts Centre was completed on budget.

“We were lucky. Once we started building, there certainly were challenges,” said the vice president of IBC, Debbie Brisebois.

“We had some issues with materials. That got sorted out, we got caught up, and it ended up on time and on budget, which is amazing,” Brisebois said.

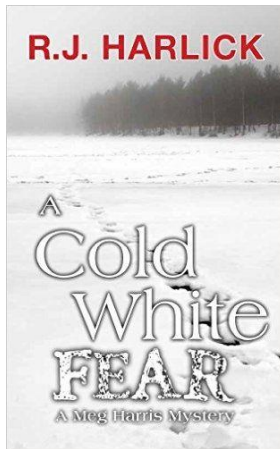
Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit_broadcast_centre_reclaims_the_past_steps_into_the_future/

Book Review: Wintry brutishness grows wearying

By [Joan Barfoot](#), Special to Postmedia Network

Saturday, December 5, 2015 12:00:00 EST AM



A COLD WHITE FEAR by R.J. Harlick (Dundurn, \$17.99)

It's a classic crime fiction set-up: an isolated, stormbound cabin, with just one or two vulnerable occupants, suddenly invaded by violent and menacing men with mysteriously criminal purposes.

And so begins R.J. Harlick's seventh Meg Harris mystery, with the promise of a suspenseful but sufficiently familiar tale of harm, quick-wittedness and courage set against several manifestations of psychotic brutishness.

Meg and 12-year-old neighbor Adjidamo— Jid— are setting up her inherited home, Three Deer Point, hours north of Montreal, for a big Christmas celebration. There's a massive snowstorm going on outside, and Meg is depressed after a fight with her husband, Eric.

Eric Odjik is chief of the First Nation reserve next to Meg's property, and has left home to continue his campaign to become national First Nations chief.

With his angry departure, Meg is left stewing about the fate of her marriage and the state of her own insecurities.

But shortly she has much more to stew about, when she opens the door to a couple of desperate, semi-frozen men, one with a bullet wound, the other a big, pedantic-sounding man who calls himself Professor. He seems semi-scholarly and apparently once taught at McGill, but he's also demanding and threatening and sports a disconcerting number of snake tattoos.

Naturally the power goes out in the storm.

Then another, nastier fellow shows up as Meg is trying to patch up the bullet wound of the Professor's companion, a First Nations man originally from the nearby reserve now led by Eric.

In such confusing, dangerous circumstances, nastiness becomes relative.

The newcomer is an entirely uncivilized biker gang member with not a redeeming quality to his name, while the Professor at least likes Meg's dog, and his wounded First Nations friend warms to Jid.

It's hard to account for why the trio has landed on Meg's remote doorstep, but they do have a purpose, it seems, one the Professor has contracted to carry out at the behest of the biker gang.

More to the immediate point, though, is that the three men — all convicted killers — have busted out of prison to get to whatever their goal is, murdering their guards on their way.

So they are being seriously hunted by the law, and are therefore seriously dangerous to anyone who doesn't hop to their demands.

For almost 350 pages, high winds and heavy snow bombard the cabin while Meg variously plans to escape to get help, tries to escape, fails to escape, tries and fails and tries again to protect Jid, her dog and herself from the worst outcome, which is obviously death.

Much of this involves detailed descriptions of how she, Jid, or both, can get to their snowshoes and out one of the huge cabin's several doors into the blasted countryside to seek help.

Much of the rest involves briefer descriptions of how they're recaptured and punished, as well as accounts of Meg's ditherings between taking one action or another, and not doing so.

By the time another group of criminals shows up and the Professor's murderous task starts being clarified, readers may be as weary as the cabin's occupants of their 24 hours of stormy, dangerous darkness— a few hours and a few decreasingly gripping ventures too long.

Joan Barfoot is a novelist living in London.

Direct Link: <http://www.lfpress.com/2015/12/02/book-review-winty-brutishness-grows-wearying>

Lindsay 'Eekwol' Knight thrilled about 'thriving' indigenous arts in Sask.

Knight is the program consultant for aboriginal arts and community engagement for the Saskatchewan Arts Board

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 06, 2015 1:53 PM CT Last Updated: Dec 06, 2015 1:53 PM CT



Hip-hop artist Lindsay Knight, aka Eekwol, is taking on a new aboriginal arts and community engagement role with the Saskatchewan Arts Board. (Supplied)

Whether it's holding a microphone, teaching a class, promoting Saskatchewan arts, or just being a mom, Lindsay Knight is never short on work.

Some people might know Knight best as the Indigenous hip-hop artist, Eekwol. She also teaches Indigenous Studies at the University of Saskatchewan.

Now, Knight is stepping into yet another role as the new program consultant for aboriginal arts and community engagement for the Saskatchewan Arts Board.



Hip-hop artist Lindsay Knight, aka Eekwol, at CBC Saskatoon. (Eric Anderson/CBC)

Knight joined CBC Radio's *Saskatchewan Weekend* host Eric Anderson to talk about her new adventure:

Why did you want to get involved with the Arts Board?

The funny thing is I have been involved with the Arts Board for quite a few years. I sat on the indigenous advisory council. So I've always sort of had my ear to the ground on what was needed and the work that needs to be done.

It's always been sort of on the hub of the indigenous arts and what's happening and what's going in the community. It's always been right there in the front lines, knowing what's going on.

For me to be a part of it is exciting because I get to sort of do what I love to do — helping out in the arts and helping out indigenous peoples.

How would you describe or summarize where indigenous arts are in our province right now?

I would say the indigenous arts are really thriving right now. We have such an expansion of mediums. We look at visuals and multimedia, we have so many young artists coming out of their traditional territories, but also out of their academia.

It's a really exciting time for the arts because obviously with technology we are able to really showcase on an international scale. So we're seeing that happen.

Why do you think right now is such a great time?

I think just with the changing times. We look at our new government. We look at a lot of indigenous people [who] are going to schools and going to schools further than Saskatchewan and coming back and sharing what they've learned.

What are you hearing from indigenous artists in Saskatchewan?

I think the key phrase is diversity. I think we really need to look at our indigenous nations and groups within Saskatchewan. We have so many treaty areas. We have so many different language systems and we have different groups.

Saskatchewan is so huge. We have the Dene way up north all the way down to the Dakotas. So there's a lot of diversity.

I think what's happening sometimes is we get sort of maybe Saskatoon-, Regina-centric with things, for obvious reasons. But I think a really important aspect is to look at those northern communities or those more rural communities and really sort of draw out the amazing art that is coming out of them right now.

What is happening in those rural places?

I can speak as a hip-hop artist. I am very familiar with the rap world and how young indigenous people have really taken to rap music and pop music and the hip hop culture.

With technology, we have this capability to record and to share through social media and YouTube of course. So we're seeing a lot more of that happening. A lot more of that connection to social media and the internet and a lot of young people are using music as a means to communicate identity.

I know you're involved already heavily in the arts scene, but to really dive into it you must be excited.

I am because I find as I am getting older as an artist I love the life, I love being able to perform and I'll continue to do all that, but also as a mother I'm really seeing within my own children how important creativity is. It should be within all aspects of our livelihood.

I've found in the past few years that I've been helping a lot of younger artists through songwriting workshops and that type of thing. But also just young people getting ahold of me over Facebook and saying, 'You did this, how did you do that? What can I do?' And I find myself then through and recommending that they apply for [an] Arts Board grant (laughs). And now I'll be sitting at a desk and doing that.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/hip-hop-artist-eekwol-indigenous-arts-saskatchewan-1.3353151>

Winnipeg duo releases Cree, French, English lullaby album

Dream Big Little One a celebration of Canadian multiculturalism, artist says

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 06, 2015 5:33 PM CT Last Updated: Dec 06, 2015 6:51 PM CT



A Winnipeg musical duo just released a three-language album they hope will help parents lull kids to sleep.

Singer-songwriters Nadia Gaudet and Jason Burnstick just put out *Dream Big Little One*, a nine track English, Cree and French selection of lullabies for children.

While this isn't his first project aimed at a young audience, Burnstick said *Dream Big* is different because it comes at an interesting time in his life.

"It's a fairly precious project to me. It started with one song," he said.

Burnstick was apprehended by Manitoba Child and Family Services (CFS) as a child and spent time in the residential school system when he was younger. While he did speak Cree before being taken into CFS care, Burnstick said the experience caused him to lose his language.

"I understood it before I left and when I came back it was gone," he said.

Learning language through music

Burnstick decided to marry his passion for music with a desire to get back in touch with his mother tongue. He started to re-learn Cree throughout the recording of the new album.

"Music is part of my life, it's part of who I am and I figure what better way to learn it [than] to do it [through music]," he said.

Burnstick said at one point in his life, he felt shame for not knowing his language.

"I just decided this wasn't my fault, this wasn't my choice to experience these things and be taken away."

While the album is officially in three different languages, the French flourishes come straight from Burnstick's francophone partner Nadia. While he's learning bits of the language as he goes along, Burnstick said he was never encouraged to learn French as a kid.

"I think I kind of turned my nose up to it. It wasn't until I grew up and got smart and more open to the world and I realized how closed off I was as a kid due to my experiences," Burnstick said.

This is also one of the first projects Burnstick has been a part of since losing his voice and having throat surgery. He's now in the process of reviving past projects that were put on hold during that time.

And while the lullaby album is for kids, Burnstick said he thinks it also hints at some of Canada's deeply held core values.

"You feel like Canada is all about multiculturalism. I just think this project embraces that philosophy," he said. "I love different languages.... For me it's just a part of my life."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-duo-releases-cree-french-english-lullaby-album-1.3353279>

Winnipeg Art Gallery's Inuit Art Centre receives \$1M gift from BMO

Bank of Montreal makes largest private donation to centre to date

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 08, 2015 12:57 PM CT Last Updated: Dec 08, 2015 1:05 PM CT



The Winnipeg Art Gallery has received \$1 million from the Bank of Montreal, the largest private donation to date for the gallery's Inuit Art Centre.

The donation from BMO will help build the centre, which will showcase Inuit art, culture and history.

"BMO Financial Group's generous gift helps the Winnipeg Art Gallery build more bridges between Canada's north and south," WAG director and CEO Stephen Borys said in a news release Tuesday.



John MacAulay, senior vice-president of BMO's Prairies and central Canada division, announces the bank's \$1-million donation to the Winnipeg Art Gallery's Inuit Art Centre on Tuesday. (Sara Calnek/CBC)

"Building on the long-standing relationship between BMO and the WAG, the Inuit Art Centre will inspire Canadians with this vibrant culture and art form like never before." BMO has been the WAG's bank since 1912.

With more than 13,000 pieces of art, including sculptures, prints and drawings, the WAG has the largest collection of Inuit art in the world.

Once built, the centre will house and display those works as well as offer programming and initiatives to bridge the divide between northern communities and cities in the south.

The four-level, 40,000-square-foot Inuit Art Centre building will be directly adjacent to the existing gallery building.

In addition to Inuit and indigenous galleries, it will include space for artist and curator residencies and five studios offering year-round programming.



"One of the many benefits of Canada's diverse population is a rich and dynamic arts community, and this initiative will provide a platform to educate Canadians of all ages on an important part of our shared history and culture," said John MacAulay, senior vice-president of BMO's Prairies and central Canada division.

The \$60-million price tag for the centre includes construction, endowment and programming.

The Winnipeg Foundation donated \$950,000 to the Inuit Art Centre in October. The provincial government committed \$15 million last month.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-art-gallery-s-inuit-art-centre-receives-1m-gift-from-bmo-1.3355798>

Vancouver aboriginal-music record nominated for Grammy

Former Straight staffer Kevin Howes produced album of forgotten folk, rock, country gems

by [Martin Dunphy](#) on December 7th, 2015 at 2:54 PM
SHARED 1



Kevin "Sipreano" Howes, Vancouver deejay, crate digger, and vinyl musical historian has received a Grammy nod for producing the album *Native North America Vol. 1: Aboriginal Folk, Rock, and Country 1966-1985*.

A Vancouver-made compilation record of forgotten or neglected North American aboriginal music from the 1960s, '70s, and '80s received a nomination for a 2016 Grammy award today.

The album, *Native North America Vol. 1: Aboriginal Folk, Rock, and Country 1966-1985*, was released almost a year ago by Seattle-based label Light in the Attic Records.

Vancouver deejay and vinyl collector Kevin Howes, a former *Georgia Straight* editorial assistant whose performing name is Sipreano, is named as compilation producer;

mastering engineer Greg Mindorff, from East Van's Suite Sound Labs, also received a nomination.

The three-LP (two-CD), 34-track release, nominated in the best historical album category, will compete with four other records for the prestigious award to be presented to a worldwide audience on February 15, 2016, including a compilation of Bob Dylan and The Band bootleg recordings and another of Erroll Garner's music. The *Native North America* LP package includes an extensive 60-page historical booklet with liner notes by Howes.

Howes told the Straight he was busy fielding media requests for interviews and information. "It was just announced this morning, so I woke up to the news," he said by phone. "It's nice to be recognized for your work, but I immediately think of all the artists on the compilation whose music inspired me to do this in the first place."

The compilation's musicians include Willie Dunn, Sugluk, Willie Thrasher, Lloyd Cheechoo, Willy Mitchell, Peter Frank, Lawrence Martin, and Alexis Utatnaq.

Howes, who previously worked with Light in the Attic to produce a compilation of transplanted Jamaican music, *Jamaica to Toronto: Soul Funk & Reggae 1967-1974*, among others, said he has been calling the musicians who appear on *Native North America* to tell them about the Grammy nomination. "Everyone was very excited to hear the news," he said, noting that he has made calls to Vancouver Island, Manitoba, Toronto, Sudbury, James Bay, Nunavut, and points in between.

"And I think of the artists who we've lost even since the compilation was made," he added.

Publicity for the album, which debuted to favourable reviews from publications such as *Rolling Stone* (read the *Straight* article [here](#)), is nice, he added, noting that Canada's major music awards, the Junos, "don't have a category for historical recordings or reissues".

Of the situation for indigenous musical artists in this country, he said: "I really hope, once again, that this is a wake-up to the Canadian music industry. Hopefully, this [Grammy nomination] will lead to some bookings for some of these artists."

The self-described "crate digger" described his greatest satisfaction as coming from the people who inspired him to put together a collection of their music.

"My biggest reward is the feedback from the artists. That's all the recognition that I'll ever need."

Direct Link: <http://www.straight.com/music/592591/vancouver-aboriginal-music-record-nominated-grammy>

First Nations Art Wanted For School Board's New Colouring Book

The Huffington Post Canada | By [Zi-Ann Lum](#)

Posted: 12/09/2015 4:50 pm EST Updated: 12/09/2015 9:59 pm EST



A northern Ontario school board is turning to artists for help on a new project putting together a First Nations-focused colouring book for students.

Nicole Richmond of the Superior-Greenstone District School Board says the project was inspired by teacher Barb McGill, known for using an Oji-Cree colouring book from Sandy Lake First Nation in her classrooms.

“She was using old photocopies from the book and when I looked for it, I wasn’t able to find a copy,” Richmond told The Huffington Post Canada.

So board officials reached out to the community with an idea to publish its own.

A [callout was released Thursday](#) asking artists to submit Woodlands-style art — characterized by its strong outlines of nature- and people-themed scenes accentuated with bright colours — for consideration in the colouring book.



A sample woodlands-style colouring book submission. (Maemaegwissenh O'Paawagun)

“Our woodlands style colouring book will enable students to learn about this vivid style rooted in Anishinabe culture, the Boreal forest, visions and dreams,” reads a poster asking for submissions.

Because the school board serves nine Anishinabek (Ojibway) communities, any opportunity to delve deeper into First Nations culture is embraced, Richmond said.

She added that in some local schools, up to 90 per cent of the students are First Nations learners.

“It is an important time in Canadian history where we are working towards reconciliation — mutual respect and understanding for all cultures, between First Nation and non-First Nation students.”

Richmond called a colouring book a “very simple” way to make a strong impact among with the next generation.

She used famous words once said by Métis leader Louis Riel to underline how art and culture are intertwined: “My people will sleep for 100 years, and when they awake, it will be the artists who give them back their spirit.”

Artists have until Jan. 30, 2016, to submit their drawings.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/12/09/first-nations-art-colouring-book_n_8762136.html

Aboriginal Business & Finance

\$12M in funding still being withheld from First Nations

Despite its opposition to controversial law, Liberal government has not moved on frozen funding

By Cameron MacIntosh, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 08, 2015 8:57 PM CT Last Updated: Dec 08, 2015 9:27 PM CT



Onion Lake Cree Nation Chief Wallace Fox has led opposition to the First Nations Financial Transparency Act (CBC News)

Forty-three First Nations are waiting on the Liberal government to release more than \$12 million in funding which was held back by the previous government under a controversial law that requires bands to post financial statements online.

The Liberals "were very clear prior to the election," they would repeal and not enforce the First Nations Financial Transparency Act (FNFTA) says lawyer Robert Hladun, who represents Saskatchewan's Onion Lake Cree Nation.

He claims the First Nation has had \$1.6 million held back over the last two years — money used to support over 800 employee salaries and access to housing.

"Each day that these funds are being withheld programs and services are being effected." said Hladun.

Law defied, millions withheld

Under the FNFTA, First Nations can have funding withheld if they fail to [post full financial audits](#) on the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada website.



First Nations are calling on Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett to release funding frozen under the First Nations Financial Transparency Act (Canadian Press)

Aboriginal leaders have called the legislation prejudicial because it requires reporting of non-taxpayer supported streams of income. First Nations claim that information is

already provided to government, and that publicizing it violates treaties as well as protections to privacy under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

CBC News has learned that shortly after the first deadline to comply passed a year ago, the Conservative government froze \$4.3 million in funding.

Documents obtained through Access to Information requests contain letters sent to 51 First Nations last year.

They include warnings of court action and a breakdown of which funds would be frozen. For some First Nations, it was as little as \$399, for others as much as \$277,516.95.

Around the same time the government also announced it was taking six First Nations to court, including Onion Lake, in an attempt to force them to comply.

Initially some of that money was paid out as some First Nations came into compliance with the act.

However in the year since the department says the amount of funds frozen has grown to approximately \$12.1 million, while the court case has stalled.

Many still not complying

As the fall election saw the Liberals replace the Conservatives in power, the FNFTA took a beating in court.

Onion Lake won a stay of proceedings against the government, when a federal judge ruled the former aboriginal affairs minister Bernard Valcourt failed to consult First Nations on the legislation.

That ruling effectively stalled the enforcement of the act in the courts, and the government is not pursuing legal action against any of the 43 First Nations which are currently not in compliance with it.

The law, however, remains on the books. It's not clear what will happen next.

Department officials have said the money is sitting, waiting to be released.



Former aboriginal affairs minister Bernard Valcourt started freezing non-essential First Nations funding one year ago. (CBC)

Hladun concedes the law can't be changed over night. But he says releasing the money would be a good start.

"We've written, there has been no response, that is concerning at this point," he said.

In a statement, the new federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett said she disagrees with the act, and is willing to work with First Nations on a resolution.

Meanwhile Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould told reporters in Ottawa that the act is part of a suite of First Nations legislation that is under review.

"We'll look at all pieces of legislation as they impact indigenous rights," she said.

So far there are no commitments to release the frozen funding.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/first-nations-funding-1.3355966>

Aboriginal Community Development

Speaking Inuktitut: just mind your Js and Qs

[Kendall Hill](#), Dec 5, 2015

Crossing the Arctic's Northwest Passage is difficult enough, but an even greater challenge lies in the local language, Inuktitut.



View of Pond Inlet, looking across to Bylot Island.

Pond Inlet, population 1600 or so, huddles on a barren shore of Baffin Island above the 72nd parallel, well within the Arctic Circle. It is 6 degrees Celsius when we arrive in midsummer. The waters of Eclipse Sound glint like blue mercury in the brittle sunshine.

The play of light on water against a wall of iced mountains makes a dazzling distraction but I'm swotting up on cultural customs before we reach the Inuit settlement, so the stunning scenery will have to wait.

Raised eyebrows mean yes. A scrunched nose is no. If shaking hands with locals, avoid a firm grip.

"It's a very small grab," Inuit culturalist Lynda Brown explained earlier to passengers aboard the *Sea Adventurer*, before pointing out it was unlikely we'd shake hands with anyone. "Most people will be quite shy," she cautioned, "but there will be lots of smiles."

For a people of few words the Inuit have an exquisitely expressive language.

From the ship, Pond Inlet resembles a strikingly bleak film set. Boxy houses cluster on a bare slope facing Baffin Bay. Instead of trees, which can't grow this far north, the hilltop is planted with sombre gravestones. Tents line the shore, the summer camps of fishermen angling for a haul of Arctic char before the sea freezes over once more.

This is the remote Qikiqtaaluk Region of Nunavut, the Inuit homeland in Canada's frozen north. At about two million square kilometres, Nunavut – "Our Land" – is bigger than four Californias, a fifth of Canada's landmass. It is only accessible by air or sea. My guidebook, from expedition operators Adventure Canada, rightly describes it as "one of the world's last great wild places".

It has taken days to get here from Greenland. We are attempting to cross the Northwest Passage but the summer ice is the heaviest in a decade so the 118-passenger *Sea Adventurer* must keep changing tack. Daily satellite updates warn us where not to go.

Hundreds of hardy explorers have perished attempting this same feat and the expedition team is being cautious. The Arctic does not need any more gravestones.

Along the hill from the cemetery stands the Nattinak Visitor Centre, pride of Pond Inlet. It houses a small but fascinating ethnographic museum of stuffed polar animals, sealskin bags of flint and steel for making fire, masks from Button Point and waterproof carriers made from hollowed fish bodies.

Inside the main hall, community members of all ages, some wearing fur-lined boots, *amauti* parkas and headdresses, wait to perform. Just a smattering of passenger ships attempt the Northwest Passage crossing during the brief summer window – 17 made it through in 2014 – so our arrival is a special occasion in a place where tourism remains a welcome novelty.

The mayor greets us in Inuit, his deputy translates, and then the games begin. Youths demonstrate alarming feats involving wild airborne leaps, a tug of war waged with heads and a loop of leather, and an excruciating game where men dig their fingers into the corner of an opponent's mouth and then pull like mad. I don't know whether to laugh or scream.

An elder lights an oil lamp then chants while our other Inuit culturalist, Lamech Kadloo, cloaked in hooded *quvvuq* parka, drums and dances. Hopping on the spot like a raven, swaying like a caribou.

Kadloo tells me later that drumming is a spring tradition. Families and friends would gather in a big igloo and sing *ayaya* songs all night to celebrate reaching midwinter, an event signalled by the appearance of the Aagjuuk constellation in the north-eastern sky. Its twin stars, Altair and Tarazed, herald the return of twilight after the seemingly eternal winter's night. Summer is coming. Time to celebrate.

"This is a happy time for us, a time for games and songs," Kadloo smiles. "It means we will have food and we will live another day."

Two young women begin a throat-singing duel, or *iviq*, clasping arms and singing directly into each other's faces. Their voices saw back and forth in grunts, squeaks, exclamations and melodic mantras timed to the rhythm of their swaying bodies.

Songs mimic the sounds of nature. This one is called "Snow Goose". Others are inspired by the noise of the winds, even water lapping against a boat.

The performance continues until one singer falters or bursts out laughing. *Katajaat* or *qiaqpaarniq*, as the Inuit call throat singing, always ends with laughter.

If you ever wondered why there are so few Js and Qs in English, the answer is Inuktitut. The Inuit language is littered with both, along with many Ks, Ts and some very long vowels.

In a climate this cold people don't open their mouths more than they have to, hence the raised eyebrows and scrunched noses. But for a people of few words the Inuit have an exquisitely expressive language.

On Baffin Island, *aqqaqataa* is that melancholy time of year when the sun starts to disappear. *Aqhautijuuk* is when two love-struck men fight a tug of war over a woman, with her in the middle. Not to be confused with *tukiqtuq*, which is body-slamming.

You already know *qajaq*, anglicised as kayak. It's one of several words English has adopted from the people of Canada, Greenland, Alaska and Russia. Anorak is another. Malamute. And igloo, obviously.

Inuktitut is a Lego language. Words are formed by sticking blocks of meaning together, a practice that yields constructions as unwieldy as Welsh but, importantly, creates a vocabulary that speaks volumes about the Inuit's extreme existence.

Ullisaqtug is a word meaning "to wait all day at a seal-breathing hole". You could write a short story about that one verb. *Summaqusirsimajuq* describes waiting for the discharge from a boil after applying a lemming-skin bandage. *Ujjaq* are the slightly aged skins from basking seals. *Qangmaa* is a word used in a song to indicate that the composer is a woman and has five or more sons. And, perhaps my favourite Inuktitut word, *nipjiqtiqtuq* means "sounds of excitement". Pure onomatopoeia.

The language has its own persuasive logic. A clock is *sigingujaq*, sun-follower. Radios are *naalaut*, "to hear things from"; a fax machine is *sukatunik titiraut* or "fast letters", while a computer is "like a brain", *qaritaujaq*.

I researched many of these words in an onboard library book, *Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut*, by John Bennett and Susan Rowley. Bennett and Rowley's volume is an attempt, in part, to chronicle Inuit customs and traditions in the face of increasing urbanisation and the simultaneous loss of indigenous oral knowledge. Today's Inuit elders are, in some communities, the last link to a way of life that is vanishing into the thin polar air.

But it hasn't totally disappeared. I meet a young hunter, Lee Inuarak, beside the track we take back to the shore to board Zodiac shuttles to the ship. He mans a makeshift shop selling just one item, a 175-centimetre tusk from a narwhal he captured in July. The tusk, a fantastic thing of spiralled ivory, rests on his quad bike and glimmers in the sunlight. He wants \$C1500 for it. We saw larger, ornately carved ones for sale in the Pond Inlet co-operative shop for \$C2000 and more. Only Canadian citizens can buy them legally.

Inuarak's tusk is one of seven he and his family harvested two weeks ago. Narwhal are hunted in summer. In winter the quarry are seals, belugas and polar bears. The Inuit are North America's last hunting culture. Up to 70 per cent of their diet still consists of "country food" – wild meats and fish. It's essential nutrition for Arctic dwellers; the

blubber of marine mammals provides them with the fat necessary to survive a polar climate.

They take only what they need to survive. At the community centre an elder explained that, of the five seal species hunted by the Inuit for centuries, none is endangered. The Inuit do not kill for sport. They believe each animal has a soul and it must not be abused or the hunt will be ruined.

Immitittijuq is one who offers fresh water to a sea mammal just after it is killed, but before it is butchered. The hunter dribbles water from his mouth into the muzzle of the slain creature. It's an act of communion, a thanksgiving between species battling to survive in the Arctic wilderness.

The writer travelled with the assistance of adventurecanada.com.

Direct Link: <https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/2015/12/05/speaking-inuktitut-just-mind-your-js-and-qs/14492340002695>

Prince George Metis Housing Society takes new name

Citizen staff / Prince George Citizen
December 3, 2015 09:52 PM



METIS HOUSING SOCIETY

The Prince George Metis Housing Society has a new name.

Now known as the Aboriginal Housing Society of Prince George, the change is to reflect "an inclusive approach to services being delivered to all aboriginal people in the Prince George region," said a statement from society president Barry Seymour.

Since the 1980s, the organization has provided affordable housing to aboriginal people in the city and surrounding area as a member of the BC Non-Profit Housing Association.

"We look forward to working with others towards finding solutions and implementing collaborative solutions for all aboriginal people who are in need of affordable housing in Prince George," said a society press release.

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/prince-george-metis-housing-society-takes-new-name-1.2125931#sthash.14FFnpM8.dpuf>

Victoria councillors back longhouse atop Beacon Hill

Bill Cleverley / Times Colonist
December 4, 2015 06:00 AM



Dilapidated Checkers Pavilion at the top of Beacon Hill. Photograph By DARREN STONE, Times Colonist

Victoria councillors have endorsed a proposal to return the top of Beacon Hill to First Nations — removing the decaying Checkers Pavilion there since 1936 and replacing it with a traditional longhouse.

The project “allows the city to really tell a story in a tangible way that would bring a truly extraordinary amount of substance to words,” said Coun. Marianne Alto, who spearheaded the project.

Coun. Jeremy Loveday called the move “a historic step toward reconciliation.”

Alto said next steps will depend on the success the Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations have in raising funds for the longhouse.

Support has been enormous since the proposal became public this week, she said. “I am probably less worried about this funding emerging in the next year than I have been about many other funding pots.”

Alto said the longhouse would be about the same size as the pavilion, about 2,000 square feet, but more rectangular. The hope is to have it completed in 2017, to coincide with Canada’s 150th birthday.

The Checkers Pavilion, built as an employment project during the Great Depression, has fallen into disrepair. It featured checker boards painted on the floor.

Returning the site to First Nations use provides the city with an opportunity to fulfil a commitment to act on recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which investigated abuse of First Nations children at residential schools. “This is an opportunity to do something that is concrete and meaningful,” Coun. Charlayne Thornton-Joe said.

Esquimalt First Nation Chief Andy Thomas and Songhees Chief Ron Sam have said they support the longhouse idea.

Roy Fletcher, chairman of the Friends of Beacon Hill Park Society, agreed that the proposal fulfils the purpose of cultural reconciliation, but suggested it’s not a done deal.

The proposal, endorsed Thursday by Victoria council’s governance committee — which includes all of the councillors — must still be voted on at a full council meeting, he said, and “when they start looking at it, they might reconsider it.”

He said that maintaining a new longhouse would be an ongoing expense. “They haven’t said who’s going to pay.”

The society is also worried that building the longhouse will destroy native plants.

The issue is “definitely” top-of-the-agenda at the next board of directors meeting, Fletcher said.

The city already has set aside the slope to the southeast of the hilltop — traditional lands of the Lekwungen people — for reburial of First Nations remains uncovered during public works excavations.

Alto explained that there would be no change in land ownership, but that First Nations would be given use of the area through an agreement.

Coun. Geoff Young said a number of practical issues have to be addressed, such as the need for security and the possible need for a water supply, toilets and access.

Coun. Pam Madoff, who led an initiative a number of years ago to restore the Checkers Pavilion into a nature house with a First Nations historical component, said there will be a number of challenges with the site.

“The one thing we kept coming up against was the safety, the security, the vandalism and the graffiti. How do you deal with that in an area that is isolated in the way that it is?” Madoff said.

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/victoria-councillors-back-longhouse-atop-beacon-hill-1.2125940#sthash.ds1bgPDo.dpuf>

Three who made a difference honoured with Everyday Political Citizen award

[Douglas Quan](#) | December 3, 2015 | Last Updated: Dec 3 8:01 PM ET



2015 Everyday Political Citizen award recipients: Hana Woldeyes, left, Cory Nicotine, top right, and Luke Anderson.

A high schooler who helps immigrant students adjust to Canadian life. A young Cree man who headed a program to expose vulnerable youth to different cultures. An engineer dedicated to making stores more accessible to people using wheelchairs.

These are the recipients of this year's Everyday Political Citizen awards, handed out by Samara Canada, a Toronto-based charity that promotes citizen engagement. During the recent federal election, Postmedia partnered with Samara Canada on a weekly series called CitizenSparks, designed to highlight how ordinary Canadians were taking part in the political process.

A jury of prominent Canadians chose the Everyday Political Citizen winners after receiving more than 300 nominations.

Hana Woldeyes, 17, remembers the “culture shock” she felt when she and her brothers immigrated to Canada from Ethiopia two years ago, sponsored by their refugee father.

“I thought I couldn’t survive here. I really wanted to go back,” she said.

“I like helping people. At the same time when I do these activities, I’m also helping myself”

But now, the Grade 12 Vancouver student is thriving and looks forward to studying politics or criminology. In the meantime, she serves as a youth ambassador for the school

board, educating principals about the anxiety immigrant students can feel and helping newcomers adjust to the Canadian school system.

“When there is a newcomer, we show them around ... show them around school, how to use lockers, where the counselling office is,” she said. “It reminded me when I first came here, how frightened I was.”

Woldeyes also volunteers with the Immigrant Services Society of BC, where she helps youth build up their public speaking skills.

“I like helping people. At the same time when I do these activities, I’m also helping myself,” she said.

Cory Nicotine, 26, has come a long way since his days living on the streets. The Edmonton man says the Idle No More movement and a trip to Tanzania through the Canada World Youth program, which engages youth in community-development projects, inspired him to want to make a difference at home.

Nicotine, a mentor at iHuman Youth Society in Edmonton, started Knowledge is Pow Wow, a continuing series of events designed to engage high-risk youth in the political process and expose them to different cultures and religions.

“I came from the same background as them, a lot of the youth I do this for. I grew up on the edge of homelessness. For them, to see me doing everything I’ve done, going to Africa, that was a big inspiration for them,” he said. “They’re my motivation.”

Nicotine, who wants to be a filmmaker, says he is planning another event on the theme of “Combatting xenophobia,” inspired by the recent debate over Canada’s decision to bring in 25,000 Syrian refugees.

“I want everyone to be viewed the same, as human beings,” he said. “I’m tired of people pointing out differences.”

“These problems exist right across the country. Let’s collectively try to solve it because there’s power in numbers’

A mountain biking accident that left Luke Anderson, 37, with a spinal cord injury prompted the Toronto structural engineer to start the StopGap Foundation, an organization that provides colourful, custom-built ramps for storefronts with single-step entrances.

The ramps do not cost anything as the materials are donated by hardware stores and the labour comes from volunteers. Anderson says about 800 ramps have been installed across the country.

But these are temporary measures.

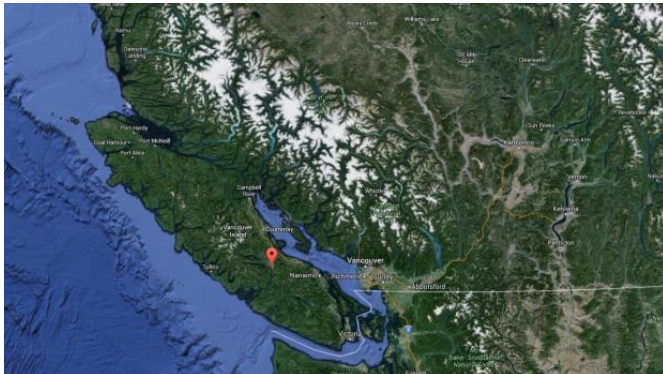
“What we’re hoping to do is stimulate conversation about the problem and get people talking about permanent solutions,” he said.

Wheelchair users continue to face other physical barriers, such as accessing transit or restaurant washrooms, he said.

“These problems exist right across the country,” he said. “Let’s collectively try to solve it because there’s power in numbers.”

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/three-who-made-a-difference-honoured-with-everyday-political-citizen-award>

Flooding prompts B.C. First Nation community to declare state of emergency



Port Alberni is seen in this Google Map.

The Canadian Press

Published Sunday, December 6, 2015 8:43PM EST

Last Updated Sunday, December 6, 2015 9:40PM EST

PORT ALBERNI, B.C. -- A First Nations community on Vancouver Island has declared a state of emergency as rising water levels threaten to flood as many as two dozen homes.

Tseshaht Chief Councillor Hugh Braker said sandbagging operations began Sunday afternoon along the Somass River, which has swollen after severe rain.

"Obviously the river is full. It can't hold anymore water," said Braker. "Rather than wait we have begun to prepare now for the flood."

Tseshaht is located just west of Port Alberni.

So far the flooding has been minor, but declaring a state of emergency allows the Tseshaht Council to pre-emptively commit resources toward flood prevention measures, said Braker.

Heavy rain is predicted to continue until Monday morning, followed by two more storms forecast to hit the Island over the coming week.

"You can't wait to the last minute," said Braker, adding the state of emergency will remain in place until at least Friday.

"We may start evacuating homes tomorrow if the water comes up high enough."

The B.C. River Forecast Centre issued a release on Sunday downgrading a flood-watch warning in the Port Alberni area to a high streamflow advisory, saying water levels in the Somass River were expected to level off by Monday.

But the release added the river is expected to rise later in the week due to the forecast storms, with a 24-hour rainfall prediction of up to 70 millimetres from Tuesday to Thursday.

About 40 residents attended an emergency meeting Sunday evening for an update on the weather and to learn how they can protect their property.

Tseshaht is no stranger to flooding. A year ago to the day, heavy rains led the band council to declare a state of emergency and evacuate several homes.

"It was the biggest flood in my memory. I'm over 60 years old and I've lived beside this river all my life," said Braker.

"We are anticipating that this year has the potential to be just as bad."

He described the mood in the community as "very tense."

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/flooding-prompts-b-c-first-nation-community-to-declare-state-of-emergency-1.2689327>

Difficult childhood shaped my Inuit identity, Natan Obed says

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 08, 2015 1:45 PM NT Last Updated: Dec 08, 2015 1:45 PM NT



Natan Obed, president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, says a difficult childhood and going to university in the United States strengthened his Inuit identity. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

A former resident of Nain is emerging as a strong voice for indigenous interests as one of Canada's youngest national Inuit leaders.

In September, Natan Obed was elected president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the organization representing some 60,000 Inuit.

Obed spoke to CBC Radio's *The Current* from Paris, where he's taking part in the climate change conference and discussing the impact global warming has on those who live in Canada's North.

Inuit Leader Natan Obed fights for a voice on climate change
25:27

Inuit Leader Natan Obed fights for a voice on climate change25:26

Obed said being a university student in Boston helped form his Inuit identity.

"People would come up to me and ask, 'Where are you from?'," he said.

"[They meant,] 'What culture do you come from, what ethnicity are you?' I was very aware of that ... so I'd want to give them an answer that made them learn about Inuit and learn about the diversity of indigenous people in the world."

"Eskimos was never the term that we used to describe ourselves, and now we're getting into a new generation, and it's time to reconsider the use for the term Eskimos in our society. "

Natan Obed urging Edmonton Eskimos to change their team name

The Current

Obed has recently spoken out publicly against the Edmonton Eskimos, saying the team name is offensive and should be changed.

Growing up, Obed's father was a prominent Inuit leader who managed land claim negotiations for the Labrador Inuit Association. He also worked as a minister and counsellor.

'It really is the proudest achievement that I have as a parent that my children are speaking Inuktitut.' - *Natan Obed*

But at home, Obed said his father was abusive and an alcoholic. Obed believes his father's destructive behaviour was informed by his difficult childhood.

"He and his family were relocated when he was five years old and then both of his parents died within two years after relocation," he said.

"He was then sent to an orphanage in St. Anthony in Newfoundland, away from his family, away from his culture."

At an early age, Obed said he decided to make very different choices in his own life.

"I think because of his experiences, and I'm not making excuses for him, he grew up in a time when he was the star person who was going to come back and save his people," said Obed.

"At the same time he had huge anguish, I believe, over his childhood and his identity."

Historical trauma passed on

Today, Obed lives in Iqaluit, Nunavut, with his wife and two sons.

"It really is the proudest achievement that I have as a parent that my children are speaking Inuktitut," Obed said of his kids, who were schooled with Inuktitut as their first language.



Obed says climate change and suicide affect the lives of everyone living in the Arctic. (Sean Kilpatrick/The Canadian Press)

In addition to climate change, Obed regularly speaks out against suicide, calling it "the major social issue of our time" affecting everyone living in the Arctic.

He said the period between the 1940s and 1960s in which many indigenous people experienced public health epidemics like tuberculosis, resettlement, relocation and residential schools — even living in communities for the first time — has caused a lot of dysfunction.

"Historical trauma is something that I talk about where if you don't get support and help, and you're not a well person, you're most likely going to carry on that to your children."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/nate-obed-inuit-paris-climate-suicide-nain-labrador-1.3355277>

Quebec Cree hunters angry after caribou carcasses found wasted by road

Cree Nation members suspect non-indigenous hunters left carcasses along Transtaiga road near Chisasibi

By Christopher Herodier, Susan Bell, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 07, 2015 7:23 PM CT Last Updated: Dec 07, 2015 7:23 PM CT



Roger Orr of Chisasibi, Que., found the carcasses of about 10 caribou strewn along the Transtaiga road near Lac Denise, about 80 km southeast of the community, on Saturday. Only choice cuts had been taken, leaving the rest of the meat to rot. (submitted by Roger Orr)

Cree Nation members are voicing their fury after almost a dozen caribou carcasses were found strewn alongside the Transtaiga highway southeast of Chisasibi, in the James Bay region of Quebec.

Roger Orr of Chisasibi went out to hunt caribou on Saturday and came across the site near Lac Denise, about 80 km southeast of the community.

"What I saw was the total disrespect for the caribou," said Orr.

"I was very saddened when I saw this, because of how we were taught to respect these animals. My mind went directly towards my thoughts on the sacredness of these animals."

Orr says he saw the pieces of at least 10 caribou. He says it appeared that the hunters were taking only the choice cuts of meat like the back legs, the front, the rump and the back strip and leaving the rest to rot.



Roger Orr of Chisasibi, Que., found the carcasses of about 10 caribou strewn along the Transtaiga road near Lac Denise, about 80 km southeast of the community, on Saturday. Only choice cuts had been taken, leaving the rest of the meat to rot. (submitted by Roger Orr)

He says he also saw dozens of trucks of non-indigenous hunters parked on the side of the highway.

Elders reacting to the photos said the problem is very upsetting to them.

"Before the white man was allowed to hunt in our territory, we never saw wasted animals on our roads," said elder Harry Bearskin.

Orr and others commenting on Facebook on Sunday and Monday said they regularly see planes from outfitting companies flying low to scare the animals to where the hunters are.

Orr also took a video over the weekend of a plane flying low over the area where the caribou were.

The outfitting company which owns the plane, Mirage Aventure, says it did have a plane in the area on the weekend to pick up a hunter. Marie-Anne Aubin, the company's deputy director general, says the hunters her company brought into the territory were not responsible for the meat wastage.

"I asked my employees if they were responsible for the leaving the carcasses on the side of the road and the answer was 'no,'" said Aubin.

"I believe my employees. They have been with us for many years, and they are responsible employees who have been briefed about how to respect not only the caribou, but also the people who live in the territory."

Aubin went on to say that hunters are not required to use the services of an outfitting organization and it is difficult to educate those who come into the territory on their own about how to conduct themselves with respect.



Roger Orr of Chisasibi, Que., says the Cree Nation needs its own policies and laws for hunting in its territory. (submitted)

Orr says the leaders of the Cree Nation need to do something to change what non-indigenous hunters are doing in the territory.

"We call this land Eeyou Istchee [the people's land]," he said.

"How can we allow this to happen? Why can't we make our rules that this does not happen? We need to have our own policies and laws in place, so we can take care of the animals."

Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come couldn't be reached for comment, but he did say in a tweet that he will bring the matter up at the regional level.

The provincial ministry responsible for regulating hunting, the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs, confirmed that an investigation into the matter is underway.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/quebec-cree-caribou-carcass-1.3354842>

Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

Woman struck, killed by vehicle near Balcarres, Sask.

By Global News



A 43-year-old woman is dead after she and her common-law spouse were struck by a vehicle on the Peepeekisis First Nation near Balcarres.

REGINA – A 43-year-old woman is dead after she and her common-law spouse were struck by a vehicle on the Peepeekisis First Nation near Balcarres.

According to the File Hills First Nations Police Service, Joy Deborah Desnomie was struck and killed while standing next to her vehicle on a gravel road in the early morning hours of Saturday, December 5.

The investigation suggests that the driver of an approaching vehicle saw the couple, but was momentarily blinded by the headlights of the parked vehicle and was unable to avoid them on the slippery road.

Desnomie, from the Peepeekisis First Nation, was pronounced deceased at the All Nations Healing Hospital in Fort Qu'Appelle.

Investigators have determined that the driver of the vehicle that struck the couple was driving without a license and that the vehicle was unregistered.

The investigation is ongoing and charges are expected.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2383274/woman-struck-killed-by-vehicle-near-balcarres-sask/>

Report: Aboriginal residents, northerners most at risk for homicide in Canada

[Yereth Rosen](#) December 5, 2015

Aboriginal residents made up nearly a quarter of Canada's homicide victims in 2014 even though they make up only about 5 percent of Canada's population, and the nation's highest homicide rates were in the country's sparsely populated northern territories, said a recent [report](#) issued by the government agency [Statistics Canada](#).

Overall, Canada's total 516 homicides in 2014 gave the nation a rate of 1.45 victims per 100,000 people -- the lowest rate since 1966. Of those victims, 117 were identified as aboriginal, and another 17 were of undetermined ethnicity, and possibly aboriginal, according to the report, released last week.

There were 10 total homicides last year in Nunavut, Yukon and the Northwest Territories, according to the report. Nine of those victims were aboriginal.

Nunavut has [only about 32,000 residents](#), so the four homicides there in 2014 translate to victim rates of 10.96 per 100,000 people in Nunavut, the highest in Canada. Nunavut has only about 32,000 residents, the smallest population of any Canadian territory or province, so the four homicides that occurred there in 2014 gave it a rate of 10.93 per 100,000 people.

Among Canada's provinces, Manitoba had the highest homicide rate, at 3.4 per 100,000, according to the report.

The Statistics Canada report does not divide the victims by gender, but there's been growing concern in Canada about a large number of unsolved murders of aboriginal women. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, in [a report issued last year](#), said more than 1,000 aboriginal women were murdered or went missing from 1980 to 2012.

Newly elected Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his Liberal Party made the issue part of their campaign platform, and Trudeau is [launching a national inquiry](#) into the cases of missing and murdered aboriginal women.

The farthest north U.S. state also had a higher homicide rate in 2014 than the nation as a whole, according to [new statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigations](#). Alaska's homicide rate last year was 5.6 per 100,000, compared to the national rate of 4.5 per 100,000.

As in Canada, aboriginal residents in Alaska suffer higher rates of homicide, according to several previously released reports.

A [report from the University of Alaska Anchorage's Justice Center](#) calculated that from 2003 to 2005, the Alaska Natives and American Indians in Alaska had a homicide-victim rate of 8.8 per 100,000 people, versus the 5.9 statewide rate for that period. The violent-death rate for Alaska Natives and American Indians in the state was also very high over that period, 65.1 per 100,000 people, and driven by high suicide rates, the report said.

Using a slightly different set of data -- homicides from 2007 to 2011, including those by “legal intervention,” which is considered justifiable homicide -- a [2013 state report](#) found a similar pattern. The statewide victim rate was 5.5 per 100,000 people over those years, but 10.5 per 100,000 for Alaska Natives and American Indians, according to the report, by the Epidemiology Section of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. By region, the highest rates over those years were in southwestern Alaska and northern Alaska, at 9.0 and 8.1 respectively, according to the report.

Direct Link: <http://www.adn.com/article/20151205/report-aboriginal-residents-northerners-most-risk-homicide-canada>

Woman found injured on rural road near Samson Cree Nation dies in hospital

By [Bryan Passifiume](#), Calgary Sun

First posted: Monday, December 07, 2015 11:27 PM MST



25-year-old Christy Ramone Crane died in hospital after she was found injured on a rural road near Samson Cree Nation. RCMP Handout photo/Calgary Sun/Postmedia Network

Discovered on a remote road north of Calgary, a woman found severely injured has died.

While Maskwacis RCMP aren't yet calling her death criminal, they are appealing for clues to piece together what happened in her final hours.

Christy Crane, 25, was found Sunday morning severely injured on a gravel road on the Samson Cree Nation.

Police hope tips from the public can help them find out what happened.

Crane is the second woman to die in the central Alberta reserve in as many weeks.

On Nov. 28, 20-year-old Kirsten Cutknife was found dead in a home in the Samson Cree Nation townsite.

Joshua Crier, 19, was later arrested and charged with second-degree murder, in addition to assault with a weapon charges against a second woman.

Anybody with information on Crane's death is asked to call Maskwacis RCMP at 780-585-3767, or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS.

Direct Link: <http://www.calgarysun.com/2015/12/08/woman-found-injured-on-rural-road-near-samson-cree-nation-dies-in-hospital>

First Nations student deaths inquest hears tearful testimony about Reggie Bushie

'The mom let out a really big scream, such a loud howl, like I've never heard before': Norma Kejick

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 07, 2015 2:59 PM ET Last Updated: Dec 07, 2015 2:59 PM ET



Norma Kejick (right), hands out tobacco to First Nations students during an annual back-to-school ceremony on the banks of the McIntyre River, close to where Reggie Bushie's body was found in 2007. (Jody Porter/CBC)

School officials testified Monday, at the inquest into seven First Nations student deaths, about their efforts to find 15-year-old Reggie Bushie after he disappeared in October 2007.

Bushie, from Poplar Hill First Nation, is one of the students whose deaths are being examined by the inquest. All of the students died in Thunder Bay, Ont. between 2000 and 2011, while in the city to attend high school.

The 15-year-old Bushie was last seen near the McIntyre River with his brother, Ricki Strang, on Oct. 26, 2007. Both teens were intoxicated, according to previous testimony. Bushie's body was pulled from the river on Nov. 1, 2007.

The inquest resumed on Monday after a scheduled week-long break. It is expected to continue until March 2016, when recommendations may be made about preventing future deaths.

Alma Hastings, an on-call student support worker in 2007, testified on Monday.

Norma Kejick also testified. She is currently the executive director at Northern Nishnawbe Education Council, that runs Dennis Franklin Cromarty First Nations high school in Thunder Bay where six of the seven youth who died were students.

Kejick was not involved with the school in 2007, but came to Thunder Bay to support a colleague who was involved with the search for Bushie and wound up in close contact with the students who were last seen with Bushie.

Watch live streaming [video from the First Nation student deaths inquest here](#).

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-student-deaths-inquest-hears-tearful-testimony-about-reggie-bushie-1.3354172>

Indigenous Woman in Law Breaks New Ground

[Ruth Hopkins](#)

12/9/15

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has appointed Jody Wilson-Raybould, a First Nations woman, as Minister of Justice and Attorney-General.

I was pleased to hear this. Natives were here before borders. We share mutual struggles and interests. I'm all for supporting one another as Indigenous peoples.

Jody Wilson-Raybould is young, but has a wealth of experience. She earned her law degree from UBC. She became a Crown prosecutor in 2000, and in 2003, she was elected as a commissioner by the Chiefs of the First Nations Summit. While serving as a councilor for the We Wai Kai Nation, where she is a member, she was elected regional chief of the B.C. Assembly of First Nations in 2009 and reelected to the post in 2012.

The previous Harper administration wasn't exactly known for having a solid working relationship with First Nations. The rights of Native peoples were attacked, even through the Court system. Their rights to protest were equated to terrorism, and Nations found

themselves at odds with oil companies who wanted to drive pipelines through their pristine lands. Wilson-Raybould has expressed distaste for the way the conservative government operated with First Nations over the past several years. With an Indigenous person like her at the helm, many hope this hostile relationship will change.

Jody's Kwak'wala name is Puglaas, meaning "Woman Born to Noble People." Besides her education and experience, she will bring a fresh, new perspective to her post. What I'm most excited about is how she will help launch a national public inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

I get choked up whenever I remember the case of Tina Fontaine, 15, who was reported missing in August of 2014. Tina had only been in Winnipeg, Manitoba for a month before her disappearance. She had run away from foster care when her small 100 pound body was found in the Red River.

Loretta Saunders, 26, was an Inuit student doing a thesis on missing and murdered Indigenous women. Last year, her body was found alongside the Transcanada highway in New Brunswick. She was pregnant when she was murdered.

Tina and Loretta are only 2 cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls that we've seen lately; each and every story is heartbreaking.

According to a recently released report on the subject, there are approximately 1,200 documented cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, from 1980-2012 alone. Others say there are even more cases that have not been documented.

United Nations Special Rapporteur James Anaya called for a national inquiry back in 2014 and a year later, a UN report would state that young First Nations, Métis and Inuit women were five times more likely to die violent deaths than the general population.

Just last month, Prime Minister Trudeau charged Attorney-General Jody Wilson-Raybould with the task of researching the implementation of marijuana legalization and regulation in Canada. Such a development could lead to hemp production on reserves. While it won't happen overnight, the process has begun. It will be interesting to see if Canada's marijuana legalization process has any correlation with similar efforts in the lower 48.

As the Chief Judge of a Tribe and a Native woman, I have a unique appreciation for Wilson-Raybould's journey, as well as the path now set before her. The justice system that Indigenous people of North America find themselves in does not belong to us. Its foundation is in English common law. It was imposed upon us by colonists. Yet, here we are. We are forced to reckon with it, to master its rules and procedure, for the good of our People, and to protect ourselves. We cannot go into negotiations with world governments blindly. We are strong, sovereign Nations. Today, we use our cultural teachings, our spiritual centers, to bring justice and law from within.

President Obama nominated Diane Joyce Humetewa, Hopi, to become a United States Court Judge for the District of Arizona. She was confirmed in 2014 and is the first Nation woman to serve in such a capacity. How amazing would it be to see a Native woman become Attorney-General in the United States as well? Native Nations have an ample number of qualified candidates within our ranks.

What does the future hold for Puglaas? Several former Canadian Prime Ministers were once Justice Ministers and Attorney-Generals. One day, we may see an Indigenous woman leading Canada. At this juncture, the future looks promising and I pray it comes to fruition. I wish her well.

Ruth Hopkins (Sisseton Wahpeton & Mdewakanton Dakota, Hunkpapa Lakota) is a writer, blogger, biologist, activist and judge.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/12/09/indigenous-woman-law-breaks-new-ground>

Bob Paulson says he doesn't want racists inside RCMP ranks

Canada's top Mountie encourages First Nations to call him directly to report racist officers

By Susana Mas, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 09, 2015 1:31 PM ET Last Updated: Dec 09, 2015 6:13 PM ET



RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson told a group of First Nations leaders on Wednesday he is trying to rid the force of racist cops within its ranks.

"I understand that there are racists in my police force. I don't want them to be in my police force," Paulson said to chiefs and other First Nations delegates gathered in Gatineau, Que., for an annual three-day meeting organized by the Assembly of First Nations.

Paulson's comments came after one chief urged the top Mountie to address racism within the force.

"We encounter racism every single day. Some of the worst racists carry a gun and they carry a badge authorized by you, Commissioner Paulson, to do the work," said Grand Chief Doug Kelly, leader of the Sto:lo Tribal Council in British Columbia.

"We need you to confront racism in the ranks."

Paulson said the RCMP Act, which was updated for the first time in 30 years during the last Parliament, gives him and other commanding officers the authority to handle matters of discipline in a "very decisive" manner.

Canada's top Mountie said First Nations could even call him directly to report racist officers.

"I would encourage you all, though, to have confidence in the processes that exist, up to and including calling me if you are having a problem with a racist in your jurisdiction or any other problem.

"We have elaborate systems to bring accountability to those people that are trusted, and in some cases not trusted but who are in power to deliver policing services," Paulson said.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau attended the AFN assembly on Tuesday, where he [laid out his top 5 priorities](#) for renewing Canada's relation with its indigenous peoples.

Former prime minister Paul Martin addressed the AFN assembly today, speaking to the chiefs about funding for First Nations education.

NDP Leader Tom Mulcair is scheduled to speak Thursday at 9:30 a.m. ET.

CBCNews.ca will carry Thursday's AFN assembly live.

Indigenous women 'shockingly' over-represented

AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde gave Paulson credit for attending the gathering and staying to address some of the concerns expressed by First Nations.

Earlier, in his speech to the group, Paulson updated First Nations on the RCMP's efforts to address the crisis of murdered and missing indigenous women.

"Of course this is nothing short of a national tragedy. The problem is clear and it's settled," Paulson said. "Indigenous women and girls in this country are shockingly over-represented in those classes of Canadians who experience violence, go missing or are murdered."

Those [findings were published](#) in an RCMP report published earlier this year.

That same report found that indigenous women are most frequently killed by someone they know, be it their spouse or a member of their community.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/first-nations-bob-paulson-racism-mmiw-1.3357406>

Aboriginal Education & Youth

Outdoor teaching centre to focus on aboriginal knowledge

Samantha WRIGHT ALLEN / Prince George Citizen
December 3, 2015 09:44 PM



The Eagle Centre Drummers perform a traditional song during the opening ceremony for the All Nations Outdoor Teaching and Learning Centre at Prince George secondary school on Thursday morning. - Brent Braaten, Photographer

For the first time, a Prince George school has a space dedicated to the idea of place-based learning within aboriginal ways of knowing.

It's called the All Nations Outdoor Teaching and Learning Centre and its home is on the Prince George secondary school grounds.

"We birthed the idea of having a dedicated space that would form that sense of belonging and identity not only for aboriginal students, but non-aboriginal," said Shelly Niemi, aboriginal education department manager, at the structure's ceremonial opening Thursday afternoon.

The idea emerged in February 2015 from community consultations between the department and parents, elders and other partners.

"The community was saying we need to have more place-based learning happening for our children. We need to have more experiential and land-based education opportunities."

It works into a district-wide approach to education that's developed over the last five years.

"Our system truthfully believes that we need to embed aboriginal ways of knowing into every aspect of what we're doing in education. It's for two purposes," Niemi said.

"For helping our children grow and explore... and build that sense of pride and identity for who they are and where they come from - but also as an act of reconciliation within education."

Later this school year, the school and staff will traditionally name the structure and decide what artwork will be used to symbolize all nations.

Lheidli T'enneh elder Edie Frederick opened the ceremony with a prayer and said she would smudge the building afterward.

"Creator, we ask that you help the children, our kids who are walking on the wrong road right now and who should be here attending school. We just ask that you inspire them to come to school to get their education," Frederick said.

In 2014, School District 57 graduated only 48.8 per cent of its aboriginal students, while 81 per cent of non-aboriginal students earned their Dogwood diploma.

"It really is a historic day for us," said acting principal Kap Manhas before Lheidli council members cut the ribbon to mark the official opening for the building, which was completed in September.

Teachers can sign out the space like any classroom.

"It's definitely a mix of education and environment and a promotion of aboriginal learning," Manhas said.

The cost of the structure was shared between the aboriginal education department and Prince George Secondary School. Niemi couldn't confirm the cost, but it was more than \$100,000.

"We think it will be a wonderful asset," said school board chair Tony Cable, who was on hand with several school trustees for the opening.

"It'll be a facility for all students."

The structure is also a very visible marker not only on the school grounds, but from Highway 97.

"That was done with intent," Niemi said.

"It's a great teaching opportunity," she said, to have the conversations about what it means and what aboriginal education can mean.

"This place is a constant daily reminder that aboriginal education is important and that we all have to have a part of it as a system. When you have that visual reminder, you have shared ownership."

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/outdoor-teaching-centre-to-focus-on-aboriginal-knowledge-1.2125919#sthash.BnoOZUgO.dpuf>

TDSB course mixes art with First Nations studies

New art course being rolled out in 45 Toronto high schools mixes the techniques of art with First Nations studies as a way to start building an indigenous understanding into every child's education.



Adiba Rahimi 14 works on her barn owl in her Grade 9 art class at Victoria Park Collegiate Institute. The course is part of a pilot project on First Nations Studies now in 44 TDSB schools.

By: [Louise Brown](#) GTA, Published on Fri Dec 04 2015

It may be art class, but Edward Zhuang's head is buried in a teen novel called *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*.

"We're reading it for this class; it's about a native kid who decides to switch to a white school — it's pretty interesting," said the Grade 9 student at Toronto's Victoria Park Collegiate.

In this unusual new art course being rolled out in 45 Toronto high schools, teachers mix the techniques of art with First Nations studies — from treaties and residential schools to hot new aboriginal DJs — as a way to start building an indigenous understanding into every child's education.

"It flows directly from the call to action from the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#), that all students be given an understanding of the effects of residential schools and treaties and aboriginal rights — because what we have learned is not a true representation of what happened," says Barb Felschow, the board's central co-ordinating principal of the Aboriginal Education Centre.

Here in teacher Amy Gottlieb's class, students make clay figures of endangered animals to reflect First Nations' relationship with nature — Edward made a polar bear. They visited nearby Brookbanks Park, where Gottlieb had them stand in silence for three long minutes to try to visualize the winter hunters who passed through here 5,000 years ago. Students worked with aboriginal artists, poets, quill-workers and dancers at the Art Gallery of Ontario, and read a poignant graphic novel called *Sugar Falls*, about a girl who goes to residential school.

"We're not just learning how to shade in colours when we're drawing; we've learned about how First Nations were treated — and it was poorly," said student Celina Mohamad.

She's one of about 2,000 Grade 9 students across the TDSB enrolled in the pilot project course called Expressions of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Cultures. If board superintendent John Chasty has his way, it will be offered in every high school in the years to come, along with Grade 9 dance, drama and music credits with the same First Nations focus.

"Now that the Truth and Reconciliation report has come out, this is the starting point, so that eventually every single kid can graduate with a knowledge of treaties and residential schools," he said.

But discussions go deeper than just residential schools, said Gottlieb. "We look at what led to them; the forced assimilation of the Indian Act, which was meant to take away their dignity and sovereignty.

"These are teenagers. They understand the desire for sovereignty!"

The Ministry of Education provides extra funding for aboriginal studies, which has allowed the TDSB to pay for extensive teacher training. Last year some 2,000 teachers spent a day at the board's Aboriginal Education Centre learning about treaties and land rights. This year the board hopes to take teachers to visit the Mohawk Institute, located in a former residential school in Brantford.

Board staff are writing lesson plans, as the ministry updates the First Nations curriculum.

Yet fewer than half of Ontario high schools offer native studies programs, and only 11 per cent offer native language programs, reports the advocacy group People for Education, which has joined the TRC's call for mandatory indigenous education.

Tanya Senk is of Métis, Cree and Saulteux heritage, and now works as the program co-ordinator for the board's Aboriginal Education Centre. She calls the new course "inspirational; it begins to address learning about the truth and an understanding of what reconciliation is."

"It's not only right thing to do, it's imperative to do."

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/yourtoronto/education/2015/12/04/tdsb-course-mixes-art-with-first-nations-studies.html>

Mikisew Cree wants to leave Northland School Division, build own school

[Alexandra Zabjek, Edmonton Journal](#)

Published on: December 7, 2015 | Last Updated: December 7, 2015 10:50 AM MST



The Athabasca Delta Community School Ryan Jackson / Edmonton Journal

A small First Nation in northern Alberta wants to break away from the troubled Northland School Division and operate its own school, arguing the move will improve educational outcomes in the community.

The Mikisew Cree First Nation, which has about 250 members on its reserve lands near Fort Chipewyan, 600 kilometres north of Edmonton, has secured federal funding to build the school on its reserve, said Chief Steve Courtoreille.

The school would serve more than 200 students from kindergarten to Grade 12. Students would come from the greater community of about 1,200 people, which includes the Mikisew Cree First Nation, the nearby Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, and the townsite of Fort Chipewyan.

“Having a band-controlled school in our community, it gives us greater power, if you want to put it that way, to make sure our kids are getting a good quality of education,” Courtoreille said in an interview.

“(It’s) being able to attract First Nations educators into the community and being able to develop our own curriculum to meet the needs of our kids in terms of language, culture. There’s no full-time language instruction at the school.”

He said industry has expressed interest in developing trades programs in the school and that he wants the province to be involved, too. “We want to break down jurisdictional boundaries to meet the needs of our students. We need a school that meets the needs of our future.”

Children from the Mikisew Cree First Nation currently attend the Athabasca Delta Community School, which opened in 1986. It has 226 students, 168 of whom live on reserves in the area.

The school is part of the Northland School Division, which has struggled for years to boost attendance numbers. Five years ago, its board was dissolved by the province due to low educational achievement. The school division covers a wide area of northern Alberta and 95 per cent of students are First Nations or Métis.

Average attendance at the Athabasca Delta School has been among the lowest in the division, at 66 per cent and 67 per cent in the past two years.

Division officials say improvements have been made at the school, with the number of students reading at an appropriate grade level increasing 12 per cent since 2013. Strengthening indigenous languages was a top priority for the school this year, and it offers instruction in Cree and Dene.

Courtoreille, who described the school’s current principal as “awesome,” said the First Nation has been working with the division. But he said educational levels aren’t where they should be and that the school building is old and in need of major repairs. He noted chronic problems with the heating system. “We’ve got the windows open when it’s -30 C outside.”

Many students leave the area to obtain a better education, he said. He said his daughter moved her son — his grandson — to Edmonton for schooling.

Band-operated schools are not uncommon in Alberta, with well over 50 in the province. This isn't the first time a First Nation has decided to opt out of the Northland School Division and go it alone with a school.

"First Nations have the ability to operate their own schools, it's their process and we'll work them on that," said Donna Barrett, the division's superintendent. "It's part of the Northland experience."

Barrett said the division has been working with the Mikisew Cree for the past year on the new project and is supportive. A new school facility is always "great for the kids" and is an important piece of infrastructure, especially in more remote communities, she said.

Northland and the Mikisew Cree are in agreement on the importance of maintaining language in schools, she added. "All of our schools operate First Nations language programs . . . but I think that at the moment they have their views on how they'd like the schools to run.

"We work with them to deliver that kind of programming, but there's a difference between having someone deliver it for you and delivering it yourself."

While educational outcomes at the Athabasca Delta School have been low, band-operated schools also struggle in Alberta.

A 2010 Journal investigation found that almost half the on-reserve schools in Alberta operate at less than half capacity, that the majority of students failed provincial achievement tests, and that without a school system, individual schools were left with no support for teachers or administrators.

The Mikisew Cree First Nation wants to open the school in 2018. It would be funded by the federal government.

Direct Link: <http://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/mikisew-cree-wants-to-leave-northland-school-division-build-own-school>

David Christie named new director of aboriginal education at Northern Lights College

[William Stodalka](#) / Alaska Highway News
December 7, 2015 07:41 AM



Director of Aboriginal Education David Christie.

The Northern Lights College has created a new directorship position to serve as the college's first point of contact for Aboriginal education.

On Thursday, David Christie, the college's co-ordinator of Aboriginal Services, was elevated to the new post of Director of Aboriginal Education.

"This is a progressive and exciting position that will help Northern Lights advance in all aspects of Aboriginal Education Services," college spokeswoman Susan Hunter said in a release.

"I am confident that we have found the best candidate for this position."

Christie will also serve as a liaison between First Nations bands, school districts, employers and the college in the campus region.

Co-ordinating a communication strategy for Aboriginal input within the college will be a priority, he said.

"I want to encourage and support the inclusion and success of Aboriginal students within Northern Lights College and the workforce because that is my passion—continuing to have regular contact with our local bands and schools to provide advocacy and support is of paramount importance to me," he said.

- See more at: <http://www.alaskahighwaynews.ca/fort-st-john/david-christie-named-new-director-of-aboriginal-education-at-northern-lights-college-1.2127337#sthash.eOPJcmjH.dpuf>

First Nations art sought for school colouring books in northern Ontario

Superior-Greenstone District School Board looking for Woodlands-style line drawings

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 07, 2015 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Dec 07, 2015 7:00 AM ET



Superior-Greenstone School Board is looking for submissions of art such as these works by Sheldon Tyance (left) and Deanna Therriault. (Superior-Greenstone School Board)

The Superior-Greenstone school board in northwestern Ontario is putting together a special colouring book for its students full of First Nations works of art.

The board is looking for woodlands-style line drawings done on white paper and outlined in black marker. Artists will be paid for their submissions.



Nicole Richmond is the aboriginal liaison with the Superior-Greenstone school board. (Supplied photo)

Students will be encouraged to colour the pages and display their work on classroom walls as part of creating a welcoming environment for First Nations students, said the board's aboriginal liaison Nicole Richmond.

"I'm an artist myself so one of the things I think about is how do we get great art on the walls and for the students to be able to do the work themselves, it engages them, there's a mindfulness piece to colouring," Richmond said.

Up to 90 per cent of students in some schools in the region east of Thunder Bay are of Indigenous heritage and it's important to make them feel welcome, Richmond said.

"When I started to look around for First Nations or an Anishinaabe colouring book, I didn't find anything," she said. "So I got the idea to do this."

The board is looking for works depicting flowers, wildlife or activities on the land and water, such as canoeing. Richmond said there's already been a positive response to the call for submissions on Facebook.

"Most people are really interested just to [submit work] because they really want this art to be in schools and they really want help to support First Nations education," she said.

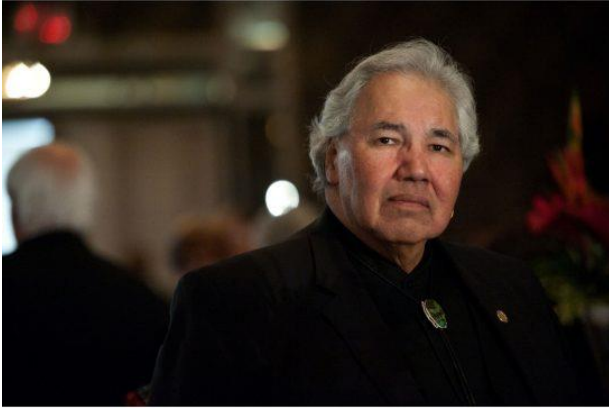
Selected artists will be paid for their work and the colouring book will be available to day cares, Friendship Centres and others who would like to use it, Richmond said.

The deadline for submissions is January 30th.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-art-sought-for-school-colouring-books-in-northern-ontario-1.3351443>

Q&A: Murray Sinclair: Time to right the wrongs of the past on First Nations education

Justice Murray Sinclair, head of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, speaks to the Star about teaching a "balanced" version of Canadian history — one that recognizes and celebrates the contributions of First Nations.



Justice Murray Sinclair, chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, talks to the Star about why teaching First Nations history should be mandatory in schools.

By: [Louise Brown](#) GTA, Published on Mon Dec 07 2015

Justice Murray Sinclair, head of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, speaks to the Star about teaching a "balanced" version of Canadian history — one that recognizes and celebrates the contributions of First Nations.

Why do we need a new First Nations curriculum?

Children in all schools — residential schools and public schools — once got the same kind of education: the message that First Nations were heathens, pagans, savages, who made no contribution to their country. This resulted in a sense of identity that was self-defeating for indigenous children and created a very negative perception among non-aboriginals, who generally saw indigenous people as inferior. It created this mythological concept that was all wrong, and racially motivated — based on the Doctrine of Discovery (a belief that the Americas rightfully belonged to Christian Europeans who "discovered" them) and the "beauty" of Columbus' arrival, which actually led to the death of 19 million indigenous people over time.

Do we know enough about First Nations history before Europeans came to North America?

Most of the messaging (of traditional curriculum) is that indigenous peoples barely lived — all they did was scavenge for food — yet academic research has outstripped that. Isn't it amazing we can talk in detail about the people of the Bronze Age (some 5,000 years ago) but we can't talk about the Indians of North America in 1450? The story of the founding of North America is a white European story. That's all they teach in schools; the colonizers' story. They don't talk about the great "city-villages" of the 13th century.

How skewed is the Canadian history we've all learned?

We teach about (European explorers John) Cabot and Jacques Cartier, about the French colonists and English colonists and the history of Upper and Lower Canada — but we don't talk about the role of First Nations peoples in the creating of Canada. It was

actually (Shawnee Chief) Tecumseh who won the War of 1812, not (General Isaac) Brock. Tecumseh actually drove the Americans back — Brock was dead by that time in the battle. But Canadian history is not balanced and it needs to be corrected.

Isn't the history of residential schools too graphic for young children?

Some of it is, but there are many things about war we don't teach children when they're young, either — the blood and violence, and information they can't handle — yet we teach children about war because there is lots they can handle. It's the same with First Nations history and residential schools and treaties. You can't hold it all back until Grade 10.

Why should First Nations history be mandatory?

All material related to the history of our society should be mandatory. There has been some pushback from those who say we're politicizing the classroom, but you already politicize the classroom by teaching cultural exclusion, not inclusion, and continue to graduate people who are not fully aware of all that Canada is. Our point is, the curriculum is unbalanced. Children should be taught proper Canadian history; that's how respect will be maintained. Schools drive a wedge because they teach aspects of history that leave out a whole group of children.

What's the impact of this unbalanced history on aboriginal students?

They're still dropping out at an enormous rate. In a survey of First Nations children who dropped out around the ages of 15 to 17, most said they decided to drop out when they were 12. So by the middle-school years, they are dissatisfied and want to leave.

Many teachers say they don't know how to teach this; they never learned it themselves.

We've called on universities to educate professionals — teachers, social workers, engineers, even scientists — about indigenous people and to use that information in their fields to start a knowledge base. They need to have an understanding of their country. This is what Canada is all about; it includes indigenous people.

What do you call for regarding the funding of First Nations schools?

Schools on reserves are required to comply with provincial standards, but the federal government doesn't give them the same resources as provincially funded schools. They get 60 per cent of what provincial schools are given for teaching materials, so as a result, they attract teachers with less experience, higher turnover, they often use old materials and don't have access to resources like chemistry labs. The level of education and standards of education are not as good. We call for the funding gap to be eliminated. The funding base is inadequate, yet to throw money at the problem without a plan is not going to help. And right now, I don't think there's a plan.

This is a big challenge, to bridge the gap in aboriginal children's achievement.

It took 125 years to create the problem — seven generations — so it may take generations to fix. The government spent so much time trying to exterminate our language and culture, it's important to take the time to re-establish language and culture as a foundation for the future. There will be some resistance from indigenous people who have been Christianized and view indigenous spirituality as negative; some communities have banned sweat lodges because they believe what they were told in residential school — that it will result in going to hell. They're fearful of embracing their culture.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/yourtoronto/education/2015/12/07/qa-murray-sinclair-time-to-right-the-wrongs-of-the-past-on-first-nations-education.html>

Cree and Ojibway language programs offered by Winnipeg School Division

By [Adrian Cheung](#), December 8, 2015 4:45 pm



Isaac Brock School will offer Cree and Ojibway bilingual programs in September 2016

WINNIPEG — Winnipeg School Division (WSD) is announcing it will offer Indigenous Cree and Ojibway bilingual language programs next fall.

The school division said the program will be run at Isaac Brock School starting in September 2016 and are expecting to fill two kindergarten classrooms in each language. It expects to add one grade per year afterwards.

Rob Riel, Director of Aboriginal Education and Newcomer Services called the programs “groundbreaking”.

“Students will be able to reflect back on who they are, through their culture, through their language and be proud of their language,” said Riel.

As part of the curriculum, students will also partake in cultural rituals such as smudging and sweat lodges.

WSD said the demand for the language programs has already been high, as 80 students are registered for next year.

In addition to Aboriginal language programs being offered, there will also be a Spanish bilingual program at Earl Grey School and a French Immersion dual track program will be added at Luxton School.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2387644/cree-and-ojibway-language-programs-offered-by-winnipeg-school-division/>

Aboriginal Health

Program trains first responders in remote areas

Samantha WRIGHT ALLEN / Prince George Citizen

December 3, 2015 09:42 PM

Updated: December 4, 2015 01:07 PM



Mason Abou from Kwadacha, left, and Bernadine Paul from Lheidli T'enneh practice their first responder skills on Francis West from Takla Landing Thursday at the Prince George Native Friendship Centre prior to graduation ceremony for 24 newly qualified first responders. Citizen photo by Brent Braaten Dec 3 2015 - Brent Braaten, Photographer

Almost 20 years ago, David Alexander was sitting in the back of a car with his brother, hands pressed to the bullet wound through his sibling's shoulder as they drove off Takla Lake First Nation towards medical care.

"We were two hours away from any hospital," said Alexander, 47.

He'd been shot from 10 feet away and the wound was about two inches from his heart.

"At first I didn't know what to do," Alexander said. "I didn't have no gloved hands but I just put pressure on both sides of his front and back and basically padded it up. We had to meet the ambulance halfway.

That was 1996. His brother survived and is fine, but that moment sparked an interest in Alexander to get educated.

"That was pretty intense," said Alexander, who had no training at the time. "Since then I started getting into first aid."

On Thursday he attended the First Nations First Responder graduation at the Prince George Native Friendship Centre, as one of 118 people trained in the last year to address a need in rural and remote communities for emergency care.

The 11-day program was launched by the First Nations Health Authority and the Red Cross to give community members the knowledge and skills to respond to illness and injuries while waiting for paramedics to arrive. Red Cross said it believes the program has already saved lives.

"First responders are essential to enhancing emergency services closer to home and where they are needed most," said Richard Jock, chief operating officer of FNHA in a statement.

It's that ability to think fast and respond to serious situations - like Alexander's move to control a major bleed - that can make the difference in remote communities.

"These members are coming from isolated communities where the ambulance is either an hour away. I think they're going to make the difference," said Paul Stone, an instructor and examiner from Victoria, who runs HeartSafe First Aid Training.

"With the defibrillator and CPR, it's the first five to 10 minutes that make the difference. It's not an hour later."

Stone, a 40-year veteran of B.C. Ambulance Service described the first responder program as "very intensive."

It teaches the students to respond to cardiac arrest, CPR, controlled bleeding, immobilize fractures, and even spends some time on delivering babies.

Rochelle Turner said getting to graduation day was a big relief.

"It feels good," added Allison Clement, whose community - Nazko First Nation - is about an hour outside of Quesnel and the nearest hospital.

"It's awesome just knowing I have this certificate and bringing it back home to my community so I could help and better the community," said Clement, who will take her skills back to her work in a logging camp.

"Now that I know, I'm confident in myself taking this course. I think I'd be able to help."

Fort St. James is the nearest hospital to Turner and while Wet'suwet'en First Nation has a health clinic, she plans to bring her new skills to her work as an early childhood educator.

"It's good to have the knowledge to look after them," said Turner, who also works with elders in her community of about 200.

Turner said it was nice to train with and meet other First Nations during the almost two-week course.

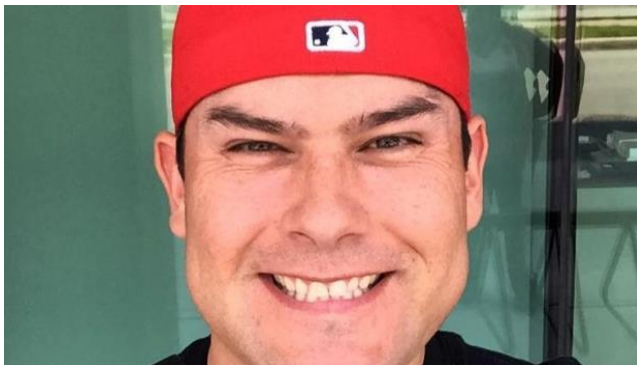
"It builds more of a network system in case we end up close to where they are and we know where to look for help," said Turner, adding she plans to encourage elders and council members to take the course too.

"You don't know when (an accident) is going to happen or what's going to happen so it's best to be prepared."

A previous version of this article incorrectly stated the number of graduates this year. In 2015, 118 people were trained through the program.

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/program-trains-first-responders-in-remote-areas-1.2125916#sthash.hH4BinGt.dpuf>

Trauma research brings pain, healing to academic Jesse Thistle



Jesse Thistle began researching his Métis/Cree roots to make sense of his family history. (Supplied)

Sunday December 06, 2015

Jesse Thistle, a Métis-Cree from Saskatchewan, is studying trauma and memory within the Métis and Cree people of Northern Saskatchewan and the northern Great Plains.

While working towards a master's degree in history at the University of Waterloo, Thistle is not only collecting facts, he's also collecting memories — often painful ones.

Understanding family history

When he was three, Thistle and his four- and five-year-old brothers were let go by their parents and raised by paternal grandparents in Toronto.

"I grew up with a lot of resentments about my culture and my mom's people. I didn't really know them, or their history or their involvement with the resistances," he explained.

Thistle ended up with addiction problems and was homeless for a while. But as he looked around, he began to wonder why so many indigenous people ended up on the streets. Once sober, Thistle started taking indigenous history courses at York University, which led him back to his own family's story and reunited him with his mother.

"I'm very proud that we're rebels and that we stood up for our sovereignty. It's a really cool feeling to know that something so historically relevant to the foundation of Canada is in my family history."

- Jesse Thistle

With help from advisers and his family, he traced his family tree and began contextualizing its history.

"I found that we had 10 ancestors that fought at Batoche and from then on had passed their pain through the generations to me."

The Battle of Batoche took place in May 1885 and it ended the Northwest Rebellion, with Canadian authorities defeating a Métis resistance.

In his research, Thistle found out about the dispersal of Métis people after the soldiers attacked Batoche. His grandmother and uncle fled to Whitefish reserve in northern Saskatchewan, where they hid for five years. Some of the children they took with them starved to death. Thistle spoke of persecution by the soldiers and said his grandmother, until she died at 102, stayed somewhat in hiding. She avoided and was extremely mistrustful of Canadian authorities.

Lasting trauma through the generations

As Thistle collected more stories of family members and elders, he could see the pain that was present in everyone he interviewed.

"It was disheartening and it took a lot out of me, but it was worth it. I have an archive of those memories and they will be there in perpetuity," he said.



After presenting a paper, Jesse Thistle ended up in hospital for emergency surgery. (Supplied)

Thistle began to notice some negative consequences on his own health as he started compiling his work into formal research papers.

As he headed to Winnipeg in 2013 to present a paper on the impacts of Batoche, he slowly realized he was becoming traumatized.

"I started to get physical pains in my lower intestine on my left side," he said.

"I gave the presentation, everybody really liked the paper. It kind of opened a new field of historical research in the field of Métis studies. But it did take a great toll on me, and I was sidelined for about a week."

Then it happened again, this time after another interview about the research. Thistle's wife rushed him to the hospital, where he underwent emergency intestinal surgery.

"What I would be afraid of is if it doesn't impact you, what does that say about you?" - *Jesse Thistle*

This type of physical response has happened to other academics studying trauma, Thistle said.

"A lot of people, they'll pick themselves. Some people have psychological breaks where they can't function. They abandon their studies."

Thistle said people are afraid to share this side of their research, because the stigma can cause people to view them as unstable and therefore, unemployable.

Recognizing historical trauma

To deal with the trauma, Thistle relies on support from his wife and cat and has developed his own ceremony with a bison skull that hangs in his office.



A bison skull hangs in Jesse Thistle's office. (Supplied)

"It's not in any way a traditional First Nations or Métis ceremony," he stressed. "[But] to me, it is. I lost my culture and it's my way of connecting with that lost past that I have. I burn sage and do a smudge with the skull, and I pray that I can make sense of what I'm reading and that I can do justice to unravelling that historical narrative."

Thistle said he is driven to continue because the work has given him a purpose. It has explained why his family broke down in the first place and allowed him to forgive his parents and understand his ancestors.

"When I returned this history to my family out west, there's been an almost immediate healing," he said.

Thistle's mom went back to school at 56, one brother is successfully addressing addiction issues, another is thriving.

"Knowing what happened, people can heal from that. When you're undiagnosed, you can't really fight against that. So that keeps me going, the healing that I see from it."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/taking-the-first-steps-on-the-road-to-reconciliation-1.3347611/trauma-research-brings-pain-healing-to-academic-jesse-thistle-1.3350632>

Unresolved water advisories creating 'health emergency' for First Nations

[Gloria Galloway](#)

OTTAWA — The Globe and Mail

Published Sunday, Dec. 06, 2015 9:06PM EST

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This story is part of [Headwaters](#), a series on the future of our most critical resource

Gloria Atlookan's three children have never known what it's like to drink a glass of water straight from their taps at home.

They are becoming teenagers, a time when grooming is important. But Ms. Atlookan will not allow them to bathe more than once every two or three days.

She's seen what washing the skin has done to other children living at the Neskantaga First Nation, an Ontario fly-in community nearly 500 kilometres north of Thunder Bay. Sores and rashes spread across their arms, legs, bellies and faces.

"As a mother, I get really scared sometimes," Ms. Atlookan said. "As long as I can remember, we've been under a boil-water advisory."

In point of fact, it's been two decades. That's when Neskantaga's water-treatment plant, which was then just a couple years old, broke down, never to run again. Which means the water could be contaminated with any number of bugs that pose threats to human health.

But not washing also has its risks. In overcrowded houses on reserves in remote Northwestern Ontario where clean running water is not available, a deadly type of bacteria called MRSA is proliferating. MRSA is a staph infection that causes sores and boils on the skin, and can penetrate the body to infect internal organs. It is resistant to commonly used antibiotics.

"I believe these things constitute a significant public health emergency," said Mike Kirlew, a doctor who treats people living on the isolated reserves and who has conducted a study of the diseases he has seen proliferate when the water is not clean. "People are paying with their lives."

Neskantaga is an extreme example of a nationwide problem. At any one time, about one in six of Canada's more than 600 First Nations is under a boil-water advisory, some of

which have been in effect for years. There are also parts of reserves where there is no running water at all – where the toilet on cold winter nights is a slop pail in a closet.

Many First Nations, like Neskantaga, are located on bodies of water that served aboriginal populations for thousands of years before filtration was even a possibility.

But stationary communities create water problems that did not affect the nomadic ancestors of today's indigenous people. Even remote parts of Canada are more polluted today than they were centuries ago. And water has always had the capacity to carry pathogens that can make people sick – the problem was just not dealt with then in the way it's expected today.

The federal government promised in 1977 to provide indigenous communities with water and sanitation similar to that which exists elsewhere in Canada. But efforts to meet that pledge have often been met with failure. Poor construction of pipes and filtration systems, a lack of training for those who are left to run the plants, and a tangled web of jurisdictional issues create a quagmire of issues that prevent the clean water from flowing.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said during the recent election campaign that, if elected, he would end the need for boil-water advisories on First Nations within five years. "It's not right in a country like Canada," he told a town hall. "This has gone on for far too long."

Mr. Trudeau then turned the job of fixing the problem over to Carolyn Bennett, the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister who is also a medical doctor and who, as a former critic in the same portfolio, has seen the effects of the problem first-hand on many occasions.

Ms. Bennett recalls visiting reserves in the Island Lake region of northern Manitoba during the H1N1 influenza pandemic of 2009. "You have 14 people living in one house and you are handing them a bar of soap and telling them to wash their hands, but there is no running water," she said. "This is an even bigger problem than just boiling the water. It is about how we sit down with the First Nations leadership and chiefs and council and develop a plan in a Kelowna-like process."

Kelowna refers to the \$5-billion deal signed with First Nations in 2005 by former Liberal prime minister Paul Martin that aimed to address a wide range of issues affecting Canada's indigenous peoples, but was scrapped when the Conservatives came to power. It included a promise of \$400-million to bring clean water to remote indigenous communities.

But some people say the water problems faced by the First Nations are almost too big, too broad in scope, to be solved by cash alone.

Lalita Bharadwaj, a toxicology expert at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, has been studying the issue for years and says governments make the mistake of trying to apply blanket solutions to diverse situations. The truth, said Bharadwaj, is that there are as many different water issues as there are First Nations communities in Canada.

In a place like Neskantaga, it's a filtration plant that was not built properly. In another, it is a communal well that is being polluted by agricultural run-off or an upstream mining operation. In some communities, there is a filtration plant but no pipes. In others, no one has the proper training and certification to deal with breakdowns.

"I do believe that the government needs to invest some time and go to each individual First Nation and find out what are the issues around the drinking water supply," said Dr. Bharadwaj – a daunting task given the number of communities.

In addition, said Dr. Bharadwaj, there are jurisdictional issues that have hamstrung the process of water delivery.

At the federal level, Health Canada is responsible for monitoring the water quality on aboriginal lands, Indigenous Affairs provides money for building the facilities, and Environment Canada sets the standards for waste water. Meanwhile, the indigenous leadership in each community is responsible for maintaining and monitoring the water systems on a daily basis. And water resources, in general, fall within the purview of the provinces.

The communication between the various agencies is ineffective, said Dr. Bharadwaj, which complicates an already complex situation – and leaves vulnerable people at risk.

One of the biggest threats now facing First Nations in Northwestern Ontario is MRSA, the bacteria that causes boils and abscesses and can then invade the body to infect the bloodstream and the kidneys.

Dr. Kirlew said the number of cases of MRSA he's seen on First Nations has "skyrocketed" since he moved to Sioux Lookout, Ont., a decade ago. In a 2012-13 study, he found the rate of MRSA infection on First Nations in Northwestern Ontario was 20 times the rate found in a previous study done in Calgary between 2000 and 2006. Between 2001 and 2008 in the mostly indigenous communities of Northern Saskatchewan, meanwhile, the annual rate of infection rose to 142.6 per 10,000 from 8.2 per 10,000; in one place the rate was as high as 482.

"This bug has been associated with socio-economic conditions like lack of access to water, overcrowding, lack of access to proper housing," said Dr. Kirlew. "It can cause overwhelming sepsis in some cases. And we have had people who have passed away, either because of the infection itself or because of complications from the infection."

Alvin Fiddler, the Grand Chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation that represents 49 First Nations in Northwestern Ontario including Neskantaga, said on any given day, nearly

half of those communities will be under some type of water advisory – from the basic “boil water” to the more serious “do not consume” and the most forceful “do not use.”

During the recent federal election campaign, Mr. Fiddler met with Mr. Trudeau and pointed out that many of the communities within the Nishnawbe Aski Nation are being pressured by industry and government to allow resource development in their regions.

“My point was, how can these communities be expected to meaningfully engage in these processes, trying to engage with multi-billion-dollar companies or governments, when they are worried about whether their children will be able to access clean water,” he said. “They need to take care of these things first, before they can be expected to come to these tables and have negotiations with government and companies. We need to have that happen.”

Ms. Bennett said she is committed to finding a solution, even if the issues are complex and difficult.

“It means that you sit down and set some targets and then work together on the plan and the budget that would be required to achieve that plan. So I think that is doable,” she said. “I think Canadians see it as a human right, almost, that people should be able to expect to turn on the tap and drink a glass of water. It’s a health imperative, but it’s also symbolic of the conditions in which certain First Nations still have to live.”

Gloria Atlookan just wants her wait for clean water to end. Her children are always amazed, she said, when they visit Thunder Bay and are permitted to drink right out of the tap, but clean water is something they should be able to take for granted when they are at home.

“Sometimes I get frustrated,” she said. “And sometimes I wonder how long do we have to live like this.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/unresolved-water-advisories-in-aboriginal-communities-creating-a-health-emergency/article27627801/>

Statistics Canada report offers insights on mental distress among Inuit

Food insecurity, lack of health care, inadequate housing key factors for mental distress among Inuit

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 08, 2015 4:30 AM CT Last Updated: Dec 08, 2015 9:48 AM CT



'Those with low, or very low food security were more likely to be in higher mental health distress,' said Thomas Anderson, the report's author, adding that food insecurity was found to be an even larger factor for men. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

A new Statistics Canada report finds that food insecurity, lack of access to health care, and inadequate housing are among some of the key social determinants that result in higher mental distress among Inuit.

The study, titled [The Social Determinants of Higher Mental Distress among Inuit](#), is based on the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey. It sampled over 2,500 people who identified as Inuit aged 18 years and over, living in Inuit Nunangat — or "Inuit homeland" — which is comprised of Nunavut, as well as northern regions of the Northwest Territories, Quebec, and Labrador.

Mental distress can be related to higher anxiety or depressive symptoms and can result in a lack of social ties, low-income and chronic physical conditions.

"Those with low, or very low food security were more likely to be in higher mental health distress," said Thomas Anderson, the report's author, adding that food insecurity was found to be an even larger factor for men.

Another factor that led to higher mental health distress is access to healthcare.

"If the respondent had encountered a time in the previous year when health care was needed but wasn't received, they were much more likely to be in higher mental distress," said Anderson.

For women, housing was a key social determinant to health.

"Living in either a dwelling that was in need of major repairs, or living in a crowded dwelling — both of those variables seemed to be associated with higher distress for women," Anderson explained.

Education was another factor that influenced mental distress, particularly for men. Inuit men with less than a high school certificate showed higher levels of mental distress, Anderson said. However, one counterintuitive finding showed that men who had achieved post-secondary education were also at greater risk of mental distress.

Anderson said "higher expectations" for a better job and greater success that is unmet in rural settings could be a few of the reasons why highly-educated men are suffering higher levels of mental distress.

"The report helps to paint a picture that mental distress doesn't come from a single factor," he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/statistics-canada-report-mental-distress-among-inuit-1.3354800>

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

Inuit Canadians have bigger issues than Eskimos' team name: Norma Dunning

'There's just so much more that he could have caught the national attention with'

By Radio Active, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 04, 2015 1:47 PM MT Last Updated: Dec 04, 2015 1:47 PM MT



Norma Dunning, a PhD student in Indigenous People's Education at the University of Alberta, is one of the founding members of Edmontonmiut, a new community group for Inuit people in Edmonton. (Caitlin Hanson/CBC)

Following Sunday's Grey Cup win by the Edmonton Eskimos, and the attendant debate over the team's name, an Inuit woman in Edmonton hopes to refocus attention on the real issues facing Inuit Canadians.

Last week, Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the national Inuit organization, called team's name derogatory and symbolic of colonial policies. He said the Eskimos need to change the name.



Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, says the term Eskimo is a relic from the past that needs to be changed. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

But Norma Dunning, a PhD student in Indigenous People's Education at the University of Alberta, says Inuit Canadians have more pressing needs and issues than the name of a professional sports team.

"On a personal level, I was very disappointed that he brought the renaming of the Edmonton football team to a national forum when he could have spoke about how attrition rates in Nunavut remain at 75 per cent," Dunning said. "That 22 people can live in a two-bedroom house and sleep in shifts. That there are people living in tents in Iqaluit.

"There's just so much more that he could have caught the national attention with. And the disparity between north and south in Canada is huge."

Dunning is one of the founding members of a new Inuit community group called the Edmontonmiut, which means "Inuit people from Edmonton."

"Our purpose is to bring together as many local Inuit as we can, and to provide support for the transient Inuit who are coming in and out of Edmonton for medical or educational purposes," she said.

"Above all, I think we would like to be able to provide the comfort for one another. It's very important to be amongst your own."

Dunning says the group's dream is to one day set up programming in the Inuktitut language, and to run sewing, art and sculpture lessons.

"We have wonderful dreams," she said.

The Edmontonmiut group hopes to contribute to larger national policies and strategy, particularly the urban Inuit national strategy, which will address and bring voice to Inuit people living in Canadian cities.

'It's very important to be amongst your own'

When Dunning first moved to Edmonton 25 years ago, she thought she was the only Inuit in the city.

"I just assumed I was the only one."

She later joined several Inuit community groups, but each eventually disbanded due to lack of funding. That's been a common problem for such groups, she said.

For now, the new group meets mainly in people's homes. There's a core group of about eight members who are regulars, she said, although anyone is welcome to join.

The main purposes of the meetings is to support each other and their shared heritage. Because the group includes several fluent Inuktitut speakers, language lessons are also a component.

"It's very important to me, and hearing them speak is so lovely," Dunning said of the classes.

With hopes to swell their numbers, the group has set up a [Facebook page](#). Dunning said they will also use social media to try to find new members.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/inuit-canadians-have-bigger-issues-than-eskimos-team-name-norma-dunning-1.3351388>

Stereotypes often prevent Canadians from helping First Nations, advocate says

By [Kate Bueckert](#) / [Daily Brew](#) – Mon, 7 Dec, 2015



Throne speech promises new tone, tax cut and turning point for First Nations

Many Canadians are willing to help refugees because they did not cause the conflict in their home countries, but those same people do not apply that mentality to First Nations communities here at home, one advocate says.

News stories about First Nations communities — lack of access to drinking water, unsafe homes and an education system that is failing children — do not lead most Canadians to ask what they can do to help, Cindy Blackstock of the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada said in an interview Monday.

“The first reaction is often judgment,” she said.

People tend to base their opinions about First Nations on “deeply embedded stereotypes,” Blackstock said from the society’s Ottawa office.

“It’s because these people are savages, they don’t deserve it,” she said of some common opinions. If people see a problem as a racial trait, “that let’s us off the hook.”

Canadians need to become educated about First Nations history and start asking why some news items are making headlines, she said.

“I want for non-Aboriginal people to be curious about the circumstances,” Blackstock said.

International vs. domestic help

When the lifeless body of three-year-old Alan Kurdi [washed up on a beach](#) in Turkey in September, many Canadians responded by calling on the government to do more to help Syrian refugees and they opened their wallets to donate.

It became a top issue in the federal election and the former Conservative government was criticized harshly after reports a sponsorship application for members of the Kurdi family was denied by the Canadian government.

But after years of reports about the problems faced by First Nations communities, the response by Canadians is much more subdued and that could be because too many headlines have made us numb to the issues, said indigenous studies professor Mike Hankard at the University of Sudbury.

“People become desensitized to it ... because they’re exposed to it constantly,” said Hankard, who is the chair of the indigenous studies department at the northern Ontario school and lives on a reserve near Sudbury, Ont.

He said issues surrounding First Nations only seem to make the news when something terrible has happened — such as the call for an inquiry into [missing and murdered aboriginal women](#), or the housing [crisis in Attawapiskat](#), Ont., or when advocates are marching in a rally to bring attention to their causes.

For the most part, “First Nations are out of sight, out of mind,” Hankard said.

Blackstock said it is also easier for the average citizen to hand out coats or donate money than to take a stand and speak out.

“Canadians are good at charity but not necessary good at social justice,” she said.

The “boy on the beach” photo was arguably the tipping point to get people to take notice of the plight of Syrian refugees — a crisis that has been going on since the spring of 2011.

Blackstock, who goes into classrooms to talk to students as part of her work, said she once asked the children what is discrimination.

“Discrimination is when the government doesn’t think you’re worth the money,” a nine-year-old girl responded.

‘So-called First Nations’

In an [analysis piece](#), CBC national affairs editor Chris Hall asked the question of whether Canadians will be as generous with First Nations as they are with the Syrian refugees.

“Canadians are quick to donate to flood relief overseas, to victims of earthquakes and hurricanes. But are they ready to reimagine how this country can respond to First Nations communities, many of them home to the most marginalized and vulnerable people inside Canada?” Hall asked in his piece.

The analysis was retweeted and shared online, and many suggested Canadians could step up their aid to indigenous groups.

“Very proud to be Canadian as we welcome refugees, but let’s not continue to neglect our own,” Ottawa resident Sean Bennett [tweeted](#).

“Are there procedures for sponsorship of First Nations families in need, like those we have for sponsoring foreign” refugees, Ramona Carmelly of Toronto [asked](#) on Twitter.

But others were quick to question why indigenous people need any support.

“Um they get billions from taxpayers already,” user Enrique Hernandez [tweeted](#). In a later tweet about Friday’s throne speech in Parliament, in which the Liberals mentioned working with First Nations communities, he [wrote](#), “How much money is enough? For So called ‘First Nations.’ Jeez. [#ThroneSpeech](#) [#cdnpoli](#) Reserves should be eliminated.”

New government, new outlook?

Blackstock said for the past decade First Nations issues have not been a priority for the federal government.

In a [statement](#) after the throne speech, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said his government will “renew Canada’s nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples.” This includes an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, as well as working to ensure First Nations children get “a quality education.”

The speech itself was brief, and the mention of First Nations just a line, but Blackstock said she was “encouraged to see we were actually in (it).”

The next step, she said, is that Trudeau needs to be honest with Canadians about the problems facing First Nation reserves — that children get less education funding, that when a community says it doesn’t have water it’s because they haven’t been given money so they can access water.

And he needs to act on what he says he will do.

Hankard said there will be many watching to see if Trudeau makes good on his promises.

“For the long term, everything begins with a first step,” he said.

Bringing change

For Canadians to help First Nations communities, the first step isn’t to open their wallets — it’s to open their hearts, Hankard said.

“The way to become educated is through relationships,” he said.

To start, people could go to their local friendship centre, attend an event there or even just pop in to introduce yourself. [Friendship centres](#) offer culturally enhanced programs and services. Doing so might help people dispel some assumptions they have, Hankard said, and a bonus is you could make a new friend.

Blackstock said the caring society has a [list of seven free things](#) Canadians can do right now to make a difference, including learning more so people can engage with young indigenous people, joining Facebook groups and, in general, educating themselves about the issues.

Any debate should not be about comparing refugees to indigenous people and it is not an “either/or” situation, she said. Canadians can do something to help both refugees from other countries and create a better life for First Nations communities here.

“It’s not about not helping other people,” Blackstock added. “Absolutely we can do both. I think that is in the Canadian tradition.”

Direct Link: <https://ca.news.yahoo.com/blogs/dailybrew/stereotypes-often-prevent-canadians-from-helping-205629374.html>

Aboriginal Inequality & Poverty

New First Nations partnership to help with high food costs in northern Ontario

KI, Lac Seul sign deal with Creewest GP Inc. for food distribution in far north

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 04, 2015 2:40 PM ET Last Updated: Dec 04, 2015 2:40 PM ET



First Nations leaders from northern Ontario signed an agreement Wednesday in Thunder Bay to build a food distribution centre at the airport in Sioux Lookout, Ont. that would serve remote northern communities. (Matt Prokopchuk / CBC)

A new partnership between First Nations in northwestern and northeastern Ontario is designed to make fresh food and other groceries more affordable in remote Ontario communities.

A memorandum of understanding was signed between Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (Big Trout Lake), Lac Seul First Nation and Creewest GP Inc., which is a for-profit corporation owned by First Nations in the northeast, including Attawapiskat, Kashechewan, Fort Albany, and Weenusk First Nations.

The agreement is to build a food distribution and logistics centre in Sioux Lookout, Ont., to better provide food to northern communities.

The high cost of staple supplies, like fruit, vegetables and fresh milk is something remote First Nations struggle with, said Clifford Bull, Chief of Lac Seul.

"In that way it will help, being part of this partnership," he said. "Also, it will create jobs and opportunities for members from all regions and all communities."

The plan calls for a new warehouse hangar to be built at the airport in Sioux Lookout which would include refrigerated storage, and act as both the transport hub for shipping food north and the business centre for processing orders and transactions.

Better food for better health

Having better access to quality food will benefit the health of people in remote communities, Bull said.

"A lot of the food that's been sent up there is a lot of, I would categorize it as junk food, and that's primarily the cause of a lot of our illnesses, diabetes for example," he said.



Lac Seul Chief Clifford Bull says the project will facilitate the transportation of healthier food to remote northern communities. (Matt Prokopchuk / CBC)

First Nations would be responsible for procuring the food, while Creewest would handle the logistics of transporting the goods from the proposed warehouse to the communities, said Ron Basaraba, Chief Executive Officer of Creewest.

That would be done, either on the planes the corporation owns, or through partnerships with other carriers, like Air Creebec.

Funding for the project is expected to come from a variety of sources, like the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, FedNor, the Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund, and Creewest's own capital, said Basaraba, adding that Creewest would own 51 per cent of the project, and member First Nations, including KI and Lac Seul, would own 49 per cent.

He added that the initial goal is to reduce the cost of groceries in northern communities by 40 per cent, and he hopes to see the project up and running within a year.

"We build this thing, there's going to be all the communities involved, I'm pretty sure," Basaraba said. "They're going to want to jump on board this."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/new-first-nations-partnership-to-help-with-high-food-costs-in-northern-ontario-1.3351051>

Aboriginal Jobs & Labour

Oil and gas projects need to provide more opportunities for First Nations, says B.C. contractor

Blueberry First Nations contractor proposes "contractor coalition" for more, longer-term jobs

By Daybreak North, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 04, 2015 1:08 PM PT Last Updated: Dec 04, 2015 1:11 PM PT



As oil and gas development continues in Northern B.C., at least one First Nations contractor is feeling left out of the benefits — despite much of the development happening on traditional First Nations territory. (Andrew Cullen/Reuters)

A Blueberry First Nation band member and owner of a contracting company in Fort St John wants to form a coalition of First Nations contractors to make sure they get their fair share of jobs for development in the Peace.

With major oil and gas development ongoing in the region — and, of course, the planned Site C dam — Clarence Apsassin wants First Nations to benefit from developments on their territory.

"We are involved in the oil and gas industry at a smaller scale as First Nations. We're trying very hard to break into the industry," he told *Daybreak North* host Russell Bowers. "All the oil and gas is coming from the north, which happens to be right in the midst of our traditional territory."

Apsassin says he hopes a contractor alliance would help build capacity among First Nations tradespeople who he says have been excluded from the bigger jobs associated with oil and gas development.

While there have been promises of jobs in the past, he says those promises have just been "rhetoric."

"That's been going on for decades. They come in and meet with us, we have one or two labourers on a job and they think that's good enough. Well, it's not good enough. We have to be involved in a higher capacity," he said.

"The construction phase, the environmental aspect of that, we are providing, as we're growing, more and more services if we can. But if we're not involved in a higher capacity, how can we make the money in terms of providing better services to the oil and gas industry and also BC Hydro?"

He says that while there have been some short-term opportunities for First Nations people on these projects, he's hoping for more long-term ones as well as apprenticeship opportunities for young people.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/oil-and-gas-first-nations-1.3351490>

Baffinland lays off 23 people, but hires more Inuit workers

Baffinland says it hired 26 new workers at Mary River and Milne Inlet

By Nick Murray, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 09, 2015 11:36 AM CT Last Updated: Dec 09, 2015 12:46 PM CT

Baffinland Iron Mines laid off 23 people in October and November, including 12 staff at the company's Mary River and Milne Inlet sites, the company confirmed to CBC.

The company says those let go were primarily in administrative, procurement and managerial roles, but it doesn't appear any of those laid off were Inuit beneficiaries. In fact, Baffinland hired 26 new workers at its sites within the last two months, eight of whom are Inuit.

"Right now they're laying off some southerners so the Inuit [hiring] numbers are getting higher as we go," said Olayuk Akesuk, an executive board member with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and QIA's liaison with Baffinland.

"As it states in the Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement, Inuit should be the last people to be laid off from any mining project."

Akesuk says as far as he knows, no Inuit were laid off. He's been working for months to develop a minimum Inuit employment goal – essentially a document setting a concrete target for an Inuit hiring rate at Baffinland.

Right now the Inuit hiring rate is 18 per cent – down from 20 per cent earlier this year – and Akesuk says half are in management roles. But the hiring rate isn't a number for actual people; it's based on the number of work hours.

While there's no target in place, Akesuk says QIA's goal is for Baffinland to hire as many Inuit as possible.

"That [18 per cent] doesn't include the contractors that are out there now," Akesuk said. "We're hoping to see more Inuit working in that field. With the minimum Inuit employment goal we're working on, I think it will get higher as we go along."

The final document for the minimum Inuit employment goal document should be ready after the new year.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/baffinland-confirms-layoffs-1.3357318>

Aboriginal Politics

McMurray Metis prepares for 2016 political battles

By [Vincent McDermott](#)

Thursday, December 3, 2015 5:29:31 MST PM



Outgoing general manager of the McMurray Metis Kyle Harrietha hosts the Elders' Christmas Party at the Sawridge Inn and Conference Centre in Fort McMurray, Alta. on Wednesday December 2, 2015. Vincent McDermott/Fort McMurray Today/Postmedia Network

The annual Elders' Christmas party hosted by the McMurray Metis turned into a celebration of favourable political victories from the past year.

But as members of the local, as well as several other Metis locals stretching across the oilsands, celebrated, the McMurray Metis warned that 2016 would be filled with even more political and industry battles to come.

Outgoing general manager Kyle Harrietha, the MC of the event, praised Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Premier Rachel Notley for supporting an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.

"We expect that commitment to be honoured and we expect they will carry forward with that consultation with First Nations and Metis people," he said.

Harrietha also lauded their support for the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Rights and all recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

"That's a lot of commitments that need to be met over the next number of years," he said.

Other political accomplishments were mentioned as well.

In September, the Metis locals from Fort Chipewyan, Fort McKay, Fort McMurray and Conklin agreed to come together as the Wood Buffalo Metis, which will help the communities promote a coordinated message and pool resources on local challenges.

"We have depend cooperation with other locals to liaise with groups," said Harrietha. Historically, these four comms are connected the residents have a shared lineage and have traded with each other for a very long time."

Financially, the McMurray Metis are in their best financial position since their official founding in 1987.

Yet, the new year will also see conflicts, many of which have already begun.

Harrietha called the planned multiplex for Conklin “critical infrastructure” for a community that has been maligned in the face of increasing industry development.

“We want to ensure this facility is built,” he said. “It is a community that has been ignored for too long with promises that were not, and have not yet, been honoured,” adding that the building’s construction will solve many quality of life issues facing the rural hamlet.

There will also be legal conflicts with industry if any Metis group in Wood Buffalo feels industrial development is harming traditional territory, and Harrietha warned industry that Metis will “aggressively assert” their rights.

Mayor Melissa Blake also said a few words, as did other Metis leaders. Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo MLA Tany Yao, who was scheduled to speak at the event, was not able to attend, as the legislature was debating the government’s controversial Bill 6.

Direct Link: <http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/2015/12/03/mcmurray-metis-prepares-for-2016-political-battles>

Throne speech offers 'nation-to-nation' relationship with Aboriginal Peoples



Governor General David Johnston delivers the speech from the throne in the Senate Chamber on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Friday December 4, 2015. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/Sean Kilpatrick)

Kristy Kirkup, The Canadian Press
Published Friday, December 4, 2015 4:47PM EST
Last Updated Friday, December 4, 2015 6:42PM EST

OTTAWA -- Justin Trudeau's Liberal government set out to make good on its campaign promise to reset the relationship with Canada's Aboriginal Peoples in a throne speech Friday that emphasized the need for reconciliation.

The newly elected government's first speech from the throne, delivered in the Senate chamber by Gov. Gen. David Johnston, heralded the start of a new partnership with First Nations, Metis and Inuit people.

"Because it is both the right thing to do and a certain path to economic growth, the government will undertake to renew, nation-to-nation, the relationship between Canada and indigenous peoples -- one based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership," Johnston said.

The government will work jointly to implement all 94 recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which explored the dark legacy of Canada's now-defunct residential school system.

Johnston mentioned one of those recommendations specifically: launching a long-awaited public inquiry into the phenomenon of missing and murdered aboriginal women.

Johnston also said the government would take steps towards ensuring every aboriginal child in Canada receives a quality education.

The federal Liberals have long insisted they intend to strike a different tone with indigenous people -- a deliberate attempt to dial back on the tension that existed with the former Conservative government.

In January 2013, the relationship reached a tipping point when the Idle No More movement was at its pinnacle.

Protesters took to the streets demanding former Prime Minister Stephen Harper meet with indigenous leaders and the Governor General as Attawapiskat First Nation chief Theresa Spence staged a high-profile hunger protest.

The movement garnered international attention as aboriginal people across Canada protested everything from missing and murdered women to the gutting of environmental protections in the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

Interim Conservative leader Rona Ambrose seemed to take a much different approach Friday as she praised the Liberals for their approach to the file.

"I think there's a lot of positive things that the government's talking about when it comes to First Nations," Ambrose said. "We will be there to support those positive initiatives."

As part of the new government's commitment, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is scheduled to speak at special chiefs assembly in Ottawa next Tuesday hosted by the Assembly of First Nations.

The government is also moving ahead with the first steps to set out the mandate for the missing and murdered inquiry. Pre-inquiry consultations will be announced in the near future, said Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett.

"We hope we will find that balance of the urgency of the inquiry, but also the importance of getting it right," she said.

There have also been other signals that the Liberals intend to come at aboriginal affairs from a different direction than their predecessors.

On Thursday, Democratic Institutions Minister Maryam Monsef kicked off a news conference "by acknowledging our presence on the traditional territory of the Algonquin peoples."

It's a symbolic gesture that's part of the effort to signal a new relationship, Bennett noted.

"There are many voices suggesting that acknowledgment ... that recognition of rights and acknowledgment of the people who were here first is very much part of rebuilding the relationship," she said.

"We have to be in the business of reconciliation, and that means starting with the recognition of the truth."

Isadore Day, the Ontario regional chief of the Assembly of First Nations, said the government's language indicates the prime minister will make good on his promise to recognize a nation-to-nation relationship.

"It is very significant," Day said.

"This government, and other governments like the Liberal provincial government in Ontario, are very consistent in their messaging about where they are, who the people are, they talk about the treaties and they talk about the importance of education and awareness."

Charlie Angus, the NDP critic on aboriginal affairs, said he was pleased to see positive signs of reconciliation in the speech after the "confrontational, mean-spirited approach" from the Conservatives.

He still has big questions for the government, however.

"There are some gaps -- and some questionable gaps," Angus said. "For example, they made a promise to end the boil-water advisories on reserves in five years, they've talked about the infrastructure crisis on reserves...."

"Reconciliation doesn't happen with just big words. It happens on the ground in communities."

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/throne-speech-offers-nation-to-nation-relationship-with-aboriginal-peoples-1.2687327>

Perry Bellegarde on what comes next

The National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations says he wants Trudeau to consult with First Nations more broadly before ambitious plans

[Evan Solomon](#), December 6, 2015



Even as Justin Trudeau makes acting on First Nations' issues a priority for his new government, the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations has a surprising warning for him: talk first, act later.

Perry Bellegarde says he wants the new Prime Minister to consult with First Nations more broadly before he embarks on his ambitious agenda that was outlined in the Speech From the Throne on Friday. That agenda includes launching an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

"There has to be a pre-consultation phase and that's what they are embarking on," National Chief Bellegarde said in an interview on "Everything is Political" on SiriusXM. "You want to get the terms of reference and authorities and powers of that commission proper. You need to hear from the families and that takes time," he said.

Bellegarde wants this pre-consultation phase to begin now, but the actual national inquiry to start on April 1, 2016.

Another key issue for the National Chief is access to government. Bellegarde suggests setting up a more formal cabinet structure that will give First Nations leaders predictable

and frequent meetings with key ministers. “You might need a cabinet committee chaired by the Prime Minister,” Bellegarde said. “It’s a chance to have access to the minister of finance, minister of health, minister of indigenous affairs, minister of the environment.”

Demands for this kind of structural change will come as early as Dec. 8, when the Prime Minister is set to meet with First Nation leaders at the Special Chiefs Assembly in Gatineau, Quebec.

While Bellegarde is pleased that Indigenous people’s issues are on high the Trudeau agenda, he knows that the distance between federal government rhetoric and reality is sometimes vast. To make sure the government follows through on its promises, Bellegarde will look closely at the next budget. “All the promises that have been made in the Throne Speech, we need to see reflections in the next Federal budget.”



AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde speaks at a news conference in Ottawa on Friday, Feb. 27, 2015 following the National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (Adrian Wylde/CP)

A full transcript of Evan Solomon’s interview with Perry Bellegarde follows.

Q: How do you make sure this is not another promise broken?

A: Again, it’s up to us to hold their feet to the fire. The Liberals campaigned hard on a lot of key issues that affect First Nations people. We want to make sure that they live up to that. We’ve still got to work with the opposition as well, and Rona Ambrose, to make sure they hold their feet to the fire. Because it’s all about closing the gap, and improving the quality of life that First Nations people face on a day to day basis, and to make it comparable to what every other Canadian takes for granted.

Q: First steps are important, because some of these things are longer-term and some are shorter-term. Let’s talk about the national inquiry into murdered and missing

Indigenous women and girls. How fast do you want that to be kicked off, and what do you expect to see?

A: There has to be a pre-consultation phase and that's what they're embarking on. Because you want to get the terms of reference and authorities and powers of that commission proper. You need to hear from the families, and you know that take time. So getting the terms of reference in place is a first step, and engaging the stakeholders is the proper process to do it. And then let's get it started this year.

Q: This year meaning this month?

A: Well not this month, no no no. You're going to have to have a pre-consultation phase, a preparatory phase to get the terms of reference right. I would think next fiscal year beginning April 1.

Q: What about next week? Because they've said their priority is to start initiating legislation based on middle-class tax cuts. Would you like to see any legislation as soon as next week related to First Nations and Indigenous peoples?

A: No, I think the first step is for him to come out to our chiefs assembly, which is what he's doing, next Tuesday morning. We have the AFN chiefs assembly coming up Dec. 8, 9 and 10, and he's coming in to speak to the chiefs. So it's all about relationship building. All of the promises that have been made in the throne speech, we need to see reflections in the next federal budget coming up. But it's all about a relationship where we have the Prime Minister and cabinet accessible to First Nations leadership. Because we're going to need a process to look over all these things. They talk about not only the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] implementation and calls to action in the inquiry. But renewing the nation-to-nation relationship based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation, partnership. And the involvement of First Nations people when it comes to reviewing and monitoring resource development projects. That is huge.

Q: Let me just slow you down on that, because these are everyday issues for you, for people they're not. Nation to nation and resource development. Very big issues. One of the real tricky issues has been consultation versus consent. Consult versus consent. Many people believe the government is obliged to consult with First Nations on some national projects, like a pipeline for example. Some First Nations say 'No, no, no, it's not consult, it's consent.' In your view, is it consultation, or is it consent, or both?

A: It's basically—you have a duty to consult and accommodate. That's the terminology. And the crown has that obligation. So they've got to ensure that those proper processes are in place. The crown has that obligation, so the crown must fulfill that obligation. And I'd even go one step further to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, which speaks to free prior and informed consent. So those things have to be in place. There has to be a process for a dialogue. There has to be a process where First Nations people have the capacity to engage with government and industry, to work

these things through. And it's all about balancing the economy and the environment. And we need to be involved. That's what it speaks to.

Q: So it's interesting, because on the environment they're going to have a new environmental assessment process, is that something First Nations would like to be involved in?

A: Totally. When they start talking about Indigenous people being more fully engaged in reviewing and monitoring major resource development projects, that is huge. As Indigenous people, we have rights, but we also have responsibilities, and one of the big responsibilities is to protect the land and the waters. Does that means we're going to get more First Nations people involved in the National Energy Board? Does that means we're going to have an Elders advisory council involved? Does that mean we're going to have our chiefs and council directly involved? That's a huge piece. So what we need now is a process to outline the details. We may need a ministerial-level table to have oversight over all these things.

Q: Tell me what that means, a ministerial-level table?

A: Well basically, it might be a cabinet committee chaired by the Prime Minister, but it's basically a chance to have access to the minister of finance, the minister of health, the minister of Indigenous affairs, the minister of the environment, the minister of health and culture. Having access with the key ministers as the issues come up.

Q: You want that structural and that's critical, because access has been an issue. You don't want to wait until someone deigns to talk to you, have requests, publish public letters, sometimes have to resort to protests. I understand that. You want a structure in place that gives regular and timely access to the concerns of First Nations and Indigenous people on all these projects?

A: That's just it, that's exactly what we need. That's the process, the structural governing process that's missing that we have to work together on implementing together. That's when you'll see action. That's when you'll see legislative and policy change. It's almost like you need a comprehensive policy and law review, because there are some laws that need to be thrown out, and there are some that need to be updated.

Q: Give us some examples?

A: Bill C-38, Bill C-45, the Omnibus bills.

Q: Ok, tell people, C-38...

A: Bill C-38, C-45 were omnibus bills that were put in place by the previous government that made it pretty easy for industry to develop without a stringent regulatory process in place. They were omnibus bills and they were unilaterally passed. So those need to be reviewed and brought in line with Section 35 of Canada's constitution, which respects

existing Aboriginal treaty rights. So those are two examples. Bill C-51 has to be reviewed...

Q: The anti-terror legislation.

A: That's what needs to happen. A comprehensive federal policy and law review.

Q: The other issue that was raised in the Speech from the Throne had to do with education, and you and I have spoken about this a lot. This is a piece that the Federal government, you know, they don't deliver education to the provinces or health care to the provinces, but they do for First Nations and Aboriginal people. And there's fundamentally a gap between if you're a young Aboriginal person or if you're not Aboriginal and you're Canadian, you get more money if you're not Aboriginal. Tell us about that gap and what you want the Liberal government to close.

A: It's a fiscal gap that needs to be closed, because it's the tuition per child. On reserves, the Indian Affairs department gives approximately \$6,500 for tuition, and provincial school systems, it's almost double that at \$11,000 or \$12,000 per child, and in the French school systems it's almost to \$20,000 per child. So there's a huge fiscal gap when it comes to tuition, and that needs to be closed. Because that affects teachers, good quality teachers, teachers salaries, that affects the libraries, that affects the computer science labs, that affects extracurricular activities. It affects a whole slew of services and programs that should be made available. And if we're going to close the gap in quality of life and get First Nations people out of poverty, there is no better way than a good quality education. And so when they start talking about that every child receives a good quality education, I infer from that yes, math and science, strong literacy skills, reading and writing skills, but as well the importance of language and culture is very fundamental to that good quality of life.

Q: And that is a huge issue, the loss of language and culture. What will be the fundamental message the chiefs will deliver on Tuesday when they meet Prime Minister Justin Trudeau?

A: The fundamental message will be 'work with us, work cooperatively.' We've got to work together to close the gap because it's really in the best interests of Canada. Make the key strategic investments in education and training and housing and access to potable water. Use the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, implement that as a way and path to reconciliation between Canadians and non-Indigenous Canadians. That's the message going forward.

Direct Link: <http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/perry-bellegarde-to-liberal-government-talk-first-act-later/>

Trudeau lays out plan for new relationship with indigenous people

5-point plan includes a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women

By Susana Mas, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 08, 2015 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Dec 08, 2015 1:36 PM ET



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau laid out his plan to reset Canada's relationship with its indigenous people during his address to a group of First Nations leaders in Gatineau, Que.

"It is time for a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with First Nations peoples, one that understands that the constitutionally guaranteed rights of First Nations in Canada are not an inconvenience but rather a sacred obligation," said Trudeau this morning.

Hundreds of chiefs and other First Nations delegates are meeting at an annual three-day gathering organized by the Assembly of First Nations.

CBCNews.ca is carrying today's events live.



Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde, left, greets Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly on Tuesday in Gatineau, Que. (Adrian Wyld/Canadian Press)

The prime minister said his government would immediately move to act on several of the promises his party made during the election campaign, including repealing bills passed "unilaterally" by the Conservatives under Stephen Harper.

"We will conduct a full review of the legislation unilaterally imposed on indigenous peoples by the previous government," said the prime minister, his speech garnering applause.

"Where measures are found to be in conflict with your rights," said Trudeau, "where they are inconsistent with the principles of good governance, or where they simply make no public policy sense, we will rescind them."

2 per cent cap lifted

Trudeau also said his government would make significant investments in education and lift the two per cent cap on funding for First Nations programs, beginning with the first budget of 2016.

"As you know, that limit has been in place for nearly 20 years," Trudeau said. "It hasn't kept up with the demographic realities of your communities, nor the actual costs of program delivery.

"It's time for a new fiscal relationship with First Nations that gives your communities sufficient, predictable and sustained funding."



Trudeau's 5 priorities

The prime minister said his government would immediately move on the five promises the Liberals made during the recent election campaign:

1. Launch a national public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.
2. Make significant investments in First Nations education.
3. Lift the two per cent cap on funding for First Nations programs.

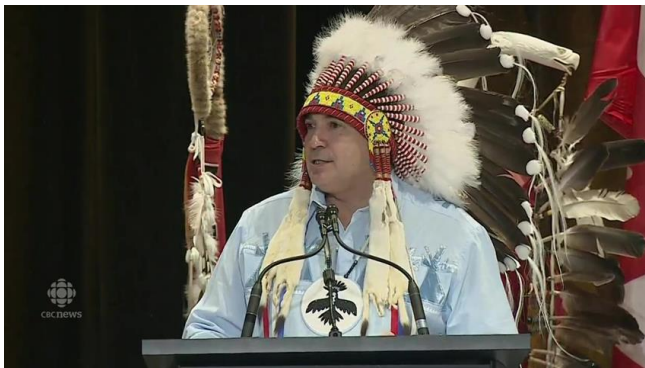
4. Implement all 94 recommendations flowing from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
5. Repeal all legislation unilaterally imposed on indigenous people by the previous government.

"These are just five of the commitments we've made as part of our efforts to repair this most important relationship," Trudeau said in the address to First Nations leaders on Tuesday.

Trudeau said a process to launch a national public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women is already underway.

"We have made this inquiry a priority for our government because those touched by this national tragedy have waited long enough. The victims deserve justice, their families an opportunity to be heard and to heal."

Hours later, Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett, Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould and Status of Women Minister Patricia Hajdu held a news conference on Parliament Hill [to launch the first phase of an inquiry](#). The ministers said they would start by meeting families of missing and murdered women this week.



Interim Conservative Leader Rona Ambrose said she supports the inquiry — a departure from the position of [the Conservatives under Stephen Harper](#), who rebuffed growing calls for a national inquiry, saying the government action on crime precluded the need for further studies.

NDP Leader Tom Mulcair, who had wanted to launch an inquiry within 100 days if his party formed government, has said he will continue to support a full national inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women.

Trudeau will also meet with the AFN and four other national aboriginal organizations when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission [presents its final report](#) into the history and legacy of Canada's residential school system on Dec. 15 in Ottawa.

The other four organizations are:

- Congress of Aboriginal Peoples.
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.
- Métis National Council.
- Native Women's Association of Canada.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/justin-trudeau-afn-indigenous-aboriginal-people-1.3354747>

Liberal Indigenous MPs propose forming cross-party 'reconciliation caucus'

[National News](#) | December 7, 2015 by [Jorge Barrera](#)



(Robert-Falcon Ouellette. APTN/file photo)

Jorge Barrera

APTN National News

Liberal MP Robert-Falcon Ouellette says Indigenous Liberal MPs want to form an all-party “reconciliation caucus” to discuss Indigenous issues.

Ouellette said the Liberal Indigenous caucus, which is made up of Indigenous Liberal MPs, decided after a long discussion to push the proposal of a reconciliation caucus open to Indigenous and non-Indigenous MPs.

“There is a need for a larger conversation with the Canadian public. I don’t think this is an Indigenous issue all by itself,” said Ouellette. “There are MPs who represent Indigenous communities, First Nations, whether urban or rural. They are facing these issues and they need a way to get the appropriate information from members who have that experience.”

Ouellette said someone told him a prophecy that predicted a solution to fix the historically degraded relationship between Indigenous peoples and the rest of Canada would only surface when the two sides walked hand-in-hand.

“A prophecy was told to me...that it wouldn’t be simply the Indigenous person by themselves who will find a solution to the issues they are facing today,” said Ouellette. “Because the time is right, it’s now, it’s when we can do this and it’s the time to move forward.”

Ouellette said proposed reconciliation caucus would resemble a cross between a Parliamentary association and a party caucus open only to MPs.

“This is an idea that came forth from all of us having a long discussion about what it is we want to do in the long term and how we can go about doing that in the best possible way. How we can build bridges between opposition parties and the government party as well as ministers and really try to work with the ministries, people who work in the civil service and the private sector? How do we take all that energy and push it in the right direction?” said Ouellette. “We have a prime minister who is really interested and wants to see change.”



Cree NDP MP Romeo Saganash is proposing an all-party Indigenous caucus. APTN/file

The idea was triggered by an initial proposal from NDP MP Romeo Saganash who sent a letter on Nov. 23 to the nine other Indigenous MPs elected in the last federal election inquiring about their interest in forming an all-party Indigenous caucus.

Saganash said the proposal outlined by Ouellette would produce a totally difference concept than the one he initially suggested.

“I was proposing an Indigenous caucus, so the people who are Indigenous would be around that table and perhaps use that as an opportunity to discuss any legislative actions that the government is going take, or legislative actions from us, that affect Aboriginal people so we can discuss them and debate them internally before the come out,” said Saganash. “It will be two different caucuses if they go ahead with that and my proposals.”

Saganash's proposal would see the 10 Indigenous MPs, eight from the Liberals and two from the NDP, meet at a "diplomatic level" to discuss upcoming legislation impacting Indigenous rights in an attempt to build a united front.

"The caucus could facilitate networking and engagement with Indigenous communities throughout this land as we enter a new and important period in the relationship between the Canadian government and Indigenous peoples," said Saganash in the letter proposing his Indigenous caucus. "I plan to support you on the many motions, bills and other Parliamentary work you are preparing. We can, when possible, coordinate and discuss legislative initiatives of interest for Indigenous peoples rights and status."

Ouellette said one of the problems with Saganash's proposals stems from concerns politics could sabotage discussion.

"There is party politics, you can't forget this. We need to find a way where we can spread those ideas," said Ouellette. "If we say something in our caucus, it should be private."

A meeting is scheduled between Indigenous MPs from the Liberals and NDP to discuss the issue on Jan. 26.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/12/07/liberal-indigenous-mps-propose-forming-cross-party-reconciliation-caucus/>

Despite fiscal pressure, Liberals to lift funding cap on First Nations: Trudeau



An elder stands beside Prime Minister Justin Trudeau after he was presented with a blanket at the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly in Gatineau, Tuesday December 8, 2015.

Hamilton Spectator

By [Kristy Kirkup](#), 6 hours ago

OTTAWA — The Liberal government will lift a long-standing cap on First Nations funding, Justin Trudeau said Tuesday as he promised a fresh fiscal partnership with

indigenous communities — even as the economic and political pressure on the federal pocketbook continues to mount.

Just one day after Finance Minister Bill Morneau conceded the promised Liberal middle-class tax cut will cost more than originally planned, Trudeau told First Nations leaders of his plan to remove the two per cent cap on reserve program funding.

"As you know, that limit has been in place for nearly 20 years," said Trudeau, who promised to remove the cap in the government's first budget.

"It hasn't kept up with the demographic realities of your communities, nor the actual costs of program delivery."

Trudeau's speech, delivered to a special assembly of chiefs from the Assembly of First Nations in Gatineau, Que., is part of a broader promise to reset the fractured relationship between Ottawa and Canada's Aboriginal Peoples.

"Constitutionally guaranteed rights of First Nations in Canada are not an inconvenience but rather a sacred obligation," Trudeau said.

"I promise you that I will be your partner in the years to come, and hope that you will be mine."

Perry Bellegarde, the assembly's national chief, told the gathering he's confident that Trudeau "is listening."

"In his mandate letter to each and every cabinet minister, Prime Minister Trudeau wrote it is time for a renewed nation-to-nation relationship with indigenous peoples," Bellegarde said.

"Very powerful words."

The new relationship needs to be based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership, Trudeau noted.

"I know that renewing our relationship is an ambitious goal, but I am equally certain that it is one we can, and will, achieve if we work together."

The prime minister has also vowed to move on implementing all 94 recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which explored the dark legacy of Canada's residential school system.

Among those recommendations is a public inquiry into the tragic phenomenon of missing and murdered aboriginal women, something to which the Liberal government has already committed.

A news conference later Tuesday with Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu, Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett and Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould was expected to provide additional details.

"We have made this inquiry a priority for our government because those touched by this national tragedy have waited long enough," Trudeau said. "The victims deserve justice, their families — an opportunity to heal and to be heard."

Quebec Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, a former national chief of the AFN, said he will be watching how the government responds to the recommendations once the inquiry is complete.

The Liberals have promised to spend two years and \$40 million on the study.

"I think the families want to be heard, people want to tell their stories ... then the report will come out," Coon Come said. "We've seen so many commissions and the reports sitting on shelves collecting dust. "

Coon Come said, however, he is hopeful about the new government's approach.

"The previous government certainly showed no respect, limited consultations, continued to push policies without the consent and involvement of the First Nations of this country," he said.

"Here, we now have a new prime minister who is stepping forward, actually coming to our assembly. I think that in itself is a great message."

Direct Link: <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/6164173-despite-fiscal-pressure-liberals-to-lift-funding-cap-on-first-nations-trudeau/>

Canada Launches Inquiry Into Murdered Aboriginal Women and Opens the Door to Repealing 'Racist' Indian Act

By [Justin Ling](#)

December 8, 2015 | 3:10 pm

Speaking in front of representatives of indigenous communities from across Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised "nothing less than a total renewal of the relationship between Canada and First Nations Peoples."

Trudeau stepped out before a meeting of the Assembly of First Nations in Gatineau, Quebec, on Tuesday, welcoming the congregation in a half-dozen different Aboriginal languages.

But while Trudeau reiterated five campaign promises, aimed at rebooting that strained relationship, his government wasn't ready to commit to reforming the legislation that governs Ottawa's relationship with many Aboriginals across the country — the Indian Act.

Of those commitments that the government did make on Tuesday, all five were met with raucous applause from the regional chiefs.

The most immediate was the commitment to launch an inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women that will aim to address the root causes, societal factors, government failings, and general circumstances that have contributed to, as Trudeau phrased it on Tuesday morning, that "national tragedy" of violence against indigenous women.

Meetings with families of women who have been killed, or who have gone missing, will begin as soon as Friday.

The government heeded calls from various indigenous people and organizations to hold off on the inquiry itself until enough stakeholders have had a chance to offer their input. Those consultations could take months, as the government tries to design the specifics of the inquiry, which will be launched some time in the next two years.

Carolyn Bennett, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, promised that the government will take "as long as it takes to get it right."

Aboriginal women in Canada are six times more likely to be the victim of murder than non-Aboriginal Canadians, according to [Statistics Canada](#). Given that Aboriginal men are even more likely to be murdered than non-Aboriginal men, calls have also been made to expand the inquiry for all Aboriginals, not just women.

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, which represents many urban-dwelling indigenous people, called the inquiry a "bold step," with National Chief Dwight Dorey adding that "The plight of our 1,200 grandmothers, mothers, sisters, aunts, daughters, cousins and friends has been ignored for far too long,"

Trudeau also promised "significant" new investment in education for First Nations communities — a figure, if Trudeau sticks to his platform, which will total over [\\$500 million](#) in additional funding per year.

He also vowed to fulfill all of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and to adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. While Trudeau has already promised to fulfill some of the committee's recommendations,

like increasing education funding, some — such as creating a statutory holiday to commemorate those who survived abuse at state-run residential schools, and re-writing the Canadian oath of citizenship to incorporate recognition of indigenous peoples — might prove more trickier to adopt.

One commitment that was immediately met with a standing ovation from the chiefs was a pledge to remove the cap that currently prevents the government from increasing funds for band councils' budgets by more than two percent per year.

"It hasn't kept up with the demographic realities of your communities, nor the actual costs of program delivery," Trudeau told the assembly.

While the other promises made by Trudeau had already been addressed during the campaign, the prime minister offered a new commitment to the chiefs on Tuesday: to abolish laws adopted by the previous government that could hurt First Peoples.

"We will conduct a full review of the legislation unilaterally imposed on indigenous peoples by the previous government," Trudeau said. "Where measures are found to be in conflict with your rights, where they are inconsistent with the principles of good governance, or where they simply make no public policy sense, we will rescind them."

We will conduct a full review of the legislation unilaterally imposed on indigenous peoples by the previous government.

That promise, however, does not extend to the much-maligned piece of legislation that lays the groundwork for Ottawa's relationship with indigenous communities — the Indian Act.

The Indian Act, which is nearly 140 years old, originally banned traditional religious and cultural practises, denied Aboriginals the right to vote, and restricted various types of trade with non-Aboriginals, amongst a host of other things.

The Indian Act has been amended extensively to remove many of its features, but it still governs how First Nations reserves elect their band councils, provide reserves with tax-exempt status, and ultimately vests financial decision-making in the hands of the Canadian government.

Asked on Tuesday whether the government would be open to repealing the legislation, Bennett said "absolutely."

Bennett, alongside Minister for the Status of Women Patty Hajdu and Minister of Justice Jody Wilson-Raybould, announced the first details of the government's inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women.

Wilson-Raybould, speaking specifically about the inquiry, said the Indian Act may come into play.

"It is a topic that could be the subject of discussion," said Wilson-Raybould. "And not to presuppose the topics of the inquiry, but certainly we will be listening to the families, we will be listening to national Aboriginal organizations, and many others to look at how we can get to the root causes of poverty and marginalization, and certainly the governing structures on First Nations communities have something to do with that."

But many First Nations are still divided about the best course of action. There is no consensus as to whether the law can be fixed, overhauled, replaced, or — as some conservative-minded academics and commentators have suggested — simply repealed, along with the entire reserve system.

The law applies to First Nations — so-called 'status Indians' — and not to Canada's Metis or Inuit communities.

Speaking on Tuesday, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Perry Bellegarde said that Canada has to "move beyond" the Indian Act. And he isn't the first.

When the Liberal Government of the day in 2002 amended the legislation, the Assembly of First Nations slammed the changes as idle tinkering.

"The Indian Act is a racist document. Why should we build on a racist document?" Then-National Chief Matthew Coon Come [told the CBC](#).

One of Coon Come successors' in the job, Shawn Atleo, summed up the Indian Act in an [op-ed](#) for the Toronto Star in 2010.

"The Indian Act controls us from cradle to grave. When we are born, the act lets the government decide who is and is not an Indian. When we die, the act gives the government control over our wills and estates. In fact, it gives the government power over pretty much everything in between. It allowed the government to apprehend our children and place them in residential schools. It holds our political and economic development hostage to an ever-growing and burdensome bureaucracy at Indian Affairs," Atleo wrote.

The most recent pushes for reform was in 2012, when Conservative Member of Parliament Rob Clarke introduced legislation to repeal certain aspects of the bill and to commit the government to adopt a plan to eliminate the Indian Act altogether. The bill requires Bennett, as the minister responsible, to report to Parliament on the progress being made to abolish the bill early in 2016.

Former prime minister Stephen Harper — the man whose legacy that Trudeau is trying to undo — [said in 2012](#) that repealing the act needs to be done, but needs to be carefully. "That tree has deep roots," he said. "Blowing up the stump would just leave a big hole."

Direct Link: <https://news.vice.com/article/canada-launches-inquiry-into-murdered-aboriginal-women-and-opens-the-door-to-repealing-racist-indian-act>

Candidates vie for Makivik's VP, secretary jobs

Nunavik Inuit head to the polls Jan. 21

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, December 08, 2015 - 4:00 pm



Voters cast a ballot last January at a Makivik Corp. polling station set up at Kuujjuaq's Forum. (FILE PHOTO)

Nunavik Inuit will see plenty of choices when they cast ballots next month to fill two executive positions at Makivik Corp., the region's birthright organization.

Five Nunavimmiut are running to serve as vice president of economic development, the same number of candidates also running for corporate secretary, Makivik announced Dec. 7.

One thing is certain: Makivik will get a new corporate secretary Jan. 21.

The organization's current corporate secretary, Andy Moorhouse, resigned last week from the job he's held since 2011 to run as vice president of economic development against incumbent VP Michael Gordon.

The two will face off against other vice president hopefuls Donald Edward Watt, Markusi Qissiq and George Peters.

Corporate secretary candidates include Jonathan Epoo, Lizzie Epoo York, Laina Grey, Adamie Padlayat and Charlie Tarkirk.

Close to 7,000 Nunavimmiut will be eligible to cast ballots for the two executive positions, each of which is for a three-year term Jan. 21. Polling stations will be set up in each community's Northern Village office that day from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Nunavik Inuit in Montreal can also vote at Makivik's Ville St-Laurent office during those same hours.

An advance poll will be held a week prior, on Jan. 15, at all NV offices and Makivik's Montreal office, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

As part of new election procedure introduced in 2011, Makivik's five executive positions are staggered, held every third Thursday in January rather than alongside the corporation's springtime annual general meeting.

Visit <http://www.Nunatsiaqonline.ca> in the New Year for Makivik candidate profiles.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674candidates_vie_for_makiviks_vp_sec_retary_roles/

John Ivison: Trudeau's embrace of First Nations laudable, but throwing money at their problems isn't the answer

[John Ivison](#) | December 8, 2015 10:14 PM ET

"The right thing to do." Justin Trudeau is using that line from last week's throne speech to justify a raft of measures he hopes will improve the lives of indigenous people.

But there are few signs the policy and spending implications of the commitments the prime minister made Tuesday to chiefs of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) have been thought through. In a speech, he promised he would be their "partner."

The chiefs — foremost among them the clearly delighted National Chief, Perry Bellegarde, already quite cozy with Trudeau — gave him repeated standing ovations. And no wonder: the new prime minister has already agreed to give them pretty much everything they want.

The commitment to launch an inquiry into murdered and missing aboriginal women is a reasonable gesture of reconciliation, charged with symbolism, even if it should probably look at the whole question of violence committed by and against aboriginals.

But the public airing of problems may yield some benefits and lead to a wider acceptance that we must do better. "It will give families an opportunity to heal and be heard," the prime minister told AFN delegates, to loud applause.

More troubling from a fiscal and policy point of view are Trudeau's commitments on First Nations education and his promise to implement all of the Truth and

Reconciliation's 94 recommendations — a pledge made before the TRC report was even tabled.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks at the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly in Gatineau, Tuesday Dec. 8, 2015.

On native education, an increase in funding is long overdue. Trudeau was correct to say that the 20-year-old, two per cent cap on funding increases has been outstripped by need and demographics. The money promised by the Conservatives is still in the fiscal framework. It was rejected by the AFN because it was accompanied by legislation that created school boards aimed at making native education more professional and improving results.

Trudeau promised to end the two per cent cap and increase funding. “Every child deserves a chance,” he said. So far, so good.

But then he essentially abrogated the federal government's responsibility to try to improve the system. “We will never impose a solution from the top down — we know it doesn't work,” he said.

Structural reforms must accompany the cash, in the form of legislation that at least ring-fences the money to ensure it is used for education. The chiefs are resistant to the idea they will lose power and funding that would result from native school boards. As the auditor-general has noted in the past, the evidence suggests bands raid the education funding envelope if they are short in other areas.

The chiefs gave Trudeau repeated standing ovations. And no wonder: the new prime minister has already agreed to give them pretty much everything they want

The Kelowna Accord, so dear to Paul Martin and still held in reverence by Liberals, was a no-strings-attached funding increase that would have simply seen many more billions wasted, producing the same abysmal graduation rates we have seen for decades.

There is no mention of new legislation from the Liberals — it seems they will just add money and hope for the best. As one seasoned observer put it, the impact would be like “pouring water on hot coals,” with no lasting effect.

On the Truth & Reconciliation Commission recommendations, Trudeau has taken a huge leap into the dark. Many of those in the report are based on acceptance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. While the Conservatives signed the declaration, they emphasized that its adoption did not change Canadian laws.

That proviso appears to have been abandoned. Now any mining or resource company looking to develop a project will require the free, prior and informed consent of First Nations — giving them a veto over government regulatory decisions.

The TRC had the admirable goals of improving native health, education and culture. But one doubts if even the authors of the report anticipated all their suggestions would be embraced quite so enthusiastically: that lawyers, journalists and teachers would all be obliged to learn about aboriginal history; that schools would be required to provide lessons on aboriginal spiritual beliefs; that there would be a new statutory holiday for a National Day of Truth and Reconciliation; that the Canada Council for the Arts would fund a new indigenous strategy; that there would be an increase of aboriginal programming on CBC; that funding would be forthcoming for aboriginal athletic development; that the oath of citizenship would be tailored to acknowledge treaties and on, and on.

No one has any idea what this wish list of ideas might cost, but a prime minister whose fledgling government is already flirting with fiscal disaster has committed to paying for them all, sight unseen.

There is a world of difference between trying to solve problems and throwing money at them. Are Trudeau's efforts really likely to transform the relationship or are they just setting up First Nations for yet another expensive failure?

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/canadian-politics/john-ivison-trudeaus-embrace-of-first-nations-laudable-but-throwing-money-at-their-problems-isnt-the-answer>

P.E.I. Mi'kmaq chiefs 'optimistic' about Trudeau's aboriginal relationship reset

'We will remain guarded in our optimism until we see these promises in action'

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 09, 2015 1:19 PM AT Last Updated: Dec 09, 2015 1:19 PM AT



Lennox Island Chief Matilda Ramjattan and Abegweit Chief Brian Francis meet in Quebec with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett. (Abegweit First Nation/Submitted)

P.E.I. Mi'kmaq chiefs are expressing cautious optimism after hearing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speak at the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly in Gatineau, Quebec, Tuesday.

"The Prime Minister pledged a total renewal of the relationship between Canada and the First Nations peoples," said Chief Brian Francis of the Abegweit First Nation.

'The respect of rights, treaties and jurisdictions is an obligation not a choice.' — *Abegweit First Nations Chief Brian Francis*

"We are optimistic that we can make progress on a relationship that honours and respects the constitutionally guaranteed rights of First Nations — a relationship that recognizes that the respect of rights, treaties and jurisdictions is an obligation, not a choice."

Trudeau's 5 priorities

The prime minister said his government would immediately move on the following five promises the Liberals made during the recent election campaign:

- Launch a national public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.
- Make significant investments in First Nations education.
- Lift the two per cent cap on funding for First Nations programs.
- Implement all 94 recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- Repeal all legislation unilaterally imposed on indigenous people by the previous government.

"Prime Minister Trudeau touched on a number of issues that P.E.I. First Nation leadership have been emphasizing and advocating on publicly," said Chief Matilda Ramjattan of Lennox Island First Nation.

'We will remain guarded'

"We are pleased that the prime minister is publicly re-committing to implementing these signature election promises; however, we will remain guarded in our optimism until we see these promises in action."

The P.E.I. Mi'kmaq chiefs, on behalf of all Island Mi'kmaq on- and off-reserve, are attending the Special Chiefs Assembly in Gatineau, Quebec.

The Assembly of First Nations is a national advocacy organization representing First Nation citizens in Canada, which includes more than 900,000 people living in 634 First Nation communities and in cities and towns across the country.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-mi-kmaq-trudeau-aboriginal-1.3357223>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

Climate change linked to human rights, Inuit leader says

"Climate change is not just an environmental issue, it is a human rights issue"

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, December 04, 2015 - 11:50 am



Indigenous peoples attending the COP21 climate change talks in Paris, including the Inuit Circumpolar Council's president, Okalik Eegeesiak, at left, speak Dec. 2 with François Hollande at his official residence. (PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE)

Dressed in traditional garments, Indigenous representatives at the COP 21 climate change talks in Paris — who included Arctic delegation head Okalik Eegeesiak from the Inuit Circumpolar Council — met Dec. 2 with François Hollande, the president of France, at his official residence, the Élysée.

But despite Hollande's words of encouragement to the group, which you can listen to [here in a video from his office](#), Indigenous peoples may face disappointment as diplomats and official delegates to the climate change talks fine-tune their new global pact on climate change.

That's because they may cut out a reference in the agreement's text on the link between climate change, human rights and the rights of Indigenous peoples, the ICC says.

Some countries are not supporting the inclusion of text that recognizes that climate change impacts human rights and the rights of Indigenous peoples, Eegeesiak, who heads the unofficial Arctic delegation, said in a Dec. 4 ICC news release.

And that portion of the text is "vitally important," Eegeesiak said.

"Climate change is not just an environmental issue, it is a human rights issue and the melting of the Arctic is impacting all aspects of Inuit life — therefore the final text must make the rights of Indigenous peoples operative and keep it in Article 2.2 [of the most recent proposed climate change agreement draft text, [which you can read here](#)]. We have the right to be cold," Eegeesiak said in the ICC release.

"I think we can all agree that every human being has a right to a safe environment and Indigenous peoples are on the frontline of climate change impacts. All of our communities from the Arctic to the Amazon are challenged by changing climates."

Eegeesiak urged Canada, Norway, the United States, Denmark, Greenland, Russia, Sweden and Finland to support their Indigenous peoples and "fight for the inclusion of human rights and the rights of Indigenous peoples language to remain."

"We need communities in these countries to mobilize and pressure their respective governments to this effect. So that pressure abroad matches the pressure Indigenous delegates are exerting on negotiators here in Paris," she said in the release.

The ICC has also circulated its position paper, called "Inuit Call for Action from Global Leaders," aimed at the 195 national delegations attending COP21, the 21st "conference of the parties" to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change.

The ICC's position paper urges global leaders, among other things, to respect the rights of Inuit and other Indigenous peoples.

Eegeesiak plans to participate in events such as Arctic Day, [Dec. 8, at the Indigenous Pavilion](#) and [a three-day forum, Dec. 10 to Dec. 12, called the "Arctic Encounter Paris"](#)

[conference](#), the only Arctic-related policy and economics side event to take place during the COP21.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674climate_change_linked_to_human_rights_inuit_leader_says/

Indigenous Leaders Stress Cooperation, Rights in Paris at COP21

[ICTMN Staff](#)

12/4/15

Several indigenous leaders from Canada are in Paris for the COP21 talks as part of the official delegation, bringing Native concerns directly to world leaders.

Among them are Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Perry Bellegarde, AFN Northwest Territories Regional Chief Bill Erasmus and AFN Manitoba Regional Chief Kevin Hart, who is part of the Manitoba delegation. Also joining them are Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami President Natan Obed and Dwight Dorey, National Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples.

As has been extensively documented, Indigenous Peoples worldwide are on the frontlines of climate change's effects, and that is especially evident in the Arctic.

"Inuit were among the first to directly experience and describe the impacts associated with a changing climate in the Arctic and on our way of life," said [ITK in a statement](#). "Inuit have called for actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for decades. We are a people who understand and appreciate that climate change is likely to become another key driver of massive societal change if concerted global actions are not taken. Inuit across Inuit Nunangat have direct experience with the severe and growing consequences of melting permafrost and coastal erosion on our communities, and Inuit food security is increasingly affected by climate change impacts on our subsistence activities."

Obed emphasized joint action.

"We must now, collectively, work together to find solutions to not only mitigate the further progression and impacts of climate change, but to provide support to those who are already facing direct and significant impacts," said Obed in ITK's statement. "Paris is a key climate summit, and I will be focused on contributing to Canada's presence by working on creating positive outcomes for the Arctic, which in turn will benefit all nations."

Bellegarde, too, called for cooperation as he tied climate change mitigation to recognizing treaty rights.

“Indigenous peoples are the first to experience the impacts of climate change and our voices and our recommendations must be heard at COP 21,” he said in an [AFN statement](#). “Climate change is affecting our peoples, our territories and our rights. We will put forward solutions that combat climate change and give life to First Nations rights to our lands, territories and resources. All states recognize that any international agreement must be made with the full and effective participation of First Nations and Indigenous peoples. We will be there to ensure First Nations have a strong voice and that outcomes recognize and respect the rights of our peoples.”

Dorey spoke of rights as well.

“Indigenous Peoples are at the forefront in the battle against climate change,” he said in a [statement](#). “We need to work towards creating an environmental strategy that recognizes the rights of Indigenous Peoples, our territories and our resources.”

He noted that ties to the land make Indigenous Peoples especially suited to be collaborators when it comes to finding solutions to climate change.

“Indigenous Peoples have historically had an intimate relationship with the land and the environmental impact of climate change is destroying that symbiosis,” said Dorey. “We have to agree on an environmental strategy that accepts climate change as a human rights issue, one that recognizes the importance of traditional knowledge in mitigating the effects of climate change, and a strategy that embraces the full participation of all Indigenous Peoples.”

In his speech at COP21, Bellegarde said that not only treaty rights but also indigenous human rights must be respected, tying climate change to climate justice. The United Nations, which is sponsoring the talks, paid for the AFN leaders to attend, the [Aboriginal Peoples Television Network](#) (APTN) reported in October. It was done through the U.N. Development Programme, which funded the trips of Bellegarde and Erasmus. The talks began on November 30 and run through December 11.

Dorey said he hoped to make an impact in Paris.

“I believe that Indigenous leaders have the ability to make an impact on state-dominated discussions,” Dorey said. “The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples will support Canada in addressing global warming and in reducing carbon pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.”

Indigenous concerns are everyone’s concerns, Bellegarde said.

“We pretty much have to be there, because as indigenous peoples, we are really the first to experience the impacts of climate change,” Bellegarde told the [Canadian Press](#) before

the talks. "Our people still are of the land and of the water ... we still hunt, we still fish, we still trap, we still gather medicines ... so, when climate change is being talked about, the indigenous peoples, we say we have rights ... but we also have responsibilities as protectors and stewards of the land and water."

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/12/04/indigenous-leaders-stress-cooperation-rights-paris-cop21-162667>

Is Salmon Farming B.C.'s Version Of The Tar Sands?

Posted: 12/03/2015 3:02 pm EST Updated: 12/03/2015 3:59 pm EST

[Jeff Matthews](#), Scientist, Environmental Activist

When you are a multi-billion dollar, foreign-owned industry continuously mired in controversy over your environmental record, you have but two options: you clean up your act, or you clean up your image. The latest public relations offensive from B.C. salmon farmers leaves little doubt that for them, image is everything.

The problems with open-pen salmon farming are [numerous](#) and well-documented. Their issues with sea lice, the spread of disease to wild salmon, antibiotic and pesticide overuse and impacts upon other marine life (to name just a few) endure, despite decades of industry reassurances to the contrary.

Public resistance to salmon farms has also remained steadfast in B.C. One needs to look no further than last week's [Global Climate March in Vancouver](#), where a veritable sea of homemade signs featuring sockeye salmon and anti-fish farm messages swam above the crowd of thousands. While marches in the rest of the world largely targeted the fossil fuel industry, in B.C., salmon farming is viewed as our own version of the tar sands, as despised as big oil.



The similarities aren't just in public perception. The salmon farming industry is increasingly using the same tactics as the fossil fuel industry to attempt to hide the reality of their environmental and social impact.

So when they are not [silencing teenage girls](#) from voicing concerns about their dirty business, salmon farmers are publishing self-congratulating [paid advertorials](#) (marketing masked as journalism) that paint a comically flattering portrait of the industry.

[In one](#), they actually celebrate that less than three per cent of B.C. salmon farms have managed to meet their own, industry-defined standards for sustainability. Three per cent. A more truthful representation might be to say that more than 97 per cent do not meet their own goals for sustainability.

But it hardly matters. Such certification schemes are [rarely effective](#) -- they are designed by industry, with standards set by industry, for the benefit of industry. In fact, the latest certification program B.C. salmon farmers are touting actually [removed the word 'sustainability' from its claims](#) after realizing there was no workable intersection between sustainability and salmon farming.

And B.C. salmon farmers have a longer way to go towards sustainability than most. The B.C. industry was recently singled out as the [second highest user of antibiotics in the world](#), behind only Chile, whose fish were recently [removed from Costco stores because of high antibiotic use](#).

One wonders where B.C. salmon farmers rank in terms of pesticide use, given their [inability to control their sea lice problem](#). Sea lice are well known to rapidly develop resistance to pesticides including the B.C. industry's stand-by treatment, SLICE. The DFO's recent approval of an alternate treatment against the pests, [hydrogen peroxide baths](#), should raise concerns that SLICE use has also increased to world-leading levels.

Even less transparent than their claims of sustainability are the [best-case estimates](#) of the economic impact of salmon farming in B.C. that the salmon farmers try to sell us. Their estimates, of course, do not factor in the \$50 million in government subsidies the industry received last year as [payment for dead fish](#) when disease outbreaks occur.

Nor do they factor in that, economically, wild salmon contribute [eight times](#) that of farmed salmon and create higher paying jobs than salmon farming -- a vibrant and local wild salmon economy that their feedlots put at risk. But it is not just salmon at risk.

We hear less often about the impacts of salmon farms on other fisheries, but the impacts are undoubtedly real, and serious. For instance, [new reports out of Norway](#) indicate that hydrogen peroxide use on salmon farms may be destroying shrimp populations. Is it simply a coincidence then, that Grieg Seafood, the Norwegian-owned salmon farming giant, recently attempted (unsuccessfully) to [pay off B.C. shrimp fishermen](#) with compensation for loss of income for allowing their feedlot operations to expand?

What is clear is that salmon farmers have no shame when it comes to green-washing their public image. The [last of their recent paid advertorials](#) attempts to glorify their relationship with B.C.'s First Nations, which despite their claims, is anything but harmonious.

Take, for example, last fall's [two week stand-off](#) at a newly sited salmon farm in Ahousaht First Nation territory, where Japanese-owned Cermaq was forced to remove the farm over concerns about its impact on wild salmon and traditional clam beds. And it is not just the Ahousaht for whom salmon farms are contentious.

The First Nations Wild Salmon Alliance, representing over a dozen nations, has [clearly voiced its concerns](#) about the industry, even leading a [request for a NAFTA review](#) of the harm to wild salmon from salmon farms in B.C.

The FNWSA has also raised what may be the most critically overlooked issue in the salmon farming debate: while coastal First Nations may have influence over siting of salmon farms in their waters, inland First Nations, who have depended upon the return wild salmon for generations and who are harmed most by the loss of wild salmon, have no say whatsoever. [Divide and conquer](#) is a strategy we have seen big oil use against First Nations in the past.

Like their corporate cousins in big oil, the multinational salmon farming corporations operating in B.C. think that glossy PR campaigns and toothless certification schemes are a substitute for real, responsible action. But putting style over substance will not help B.C.'s already struggling wild salmon. It is doubtful that they will be able to survive the combined threats of climate change and disease from open-pen salmon feedlots.

We are already locked into two or more degrees of global temperature rise. Salmon farmers have had decades to clean up their act and have failed to do so.

It is time for them to go, to give our wild salmon a fighting chance.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/jeff-matthews/bc-salmon-farming_b_8695522.html

Sisson mine project slammed by aboriginal leaders

Northcliff Resources CEO Chris Zahovskis said the company had received 'positive support' from First Nations

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 04, 2015 6:00 AM AT Last Updated: Dec 04, 2015 2:12 PM AT

Aboriginal leaders say they don't know where Northcliff Resources is getting the idea First Nations are more accepting of the Sisson Brook mine project.



St. Mary's First Nation Chief Candice Paul said her members would be heartbroken by the Sisson Brook mine approval. (CBC)

The Department of Environment and Local Government announced on Thursday it had approved the open-pit mine after its environmental impact assessment.

Dominique Nouvet, who is a lawyer for six Maliseet bands, said none of her clients have agreed to support the project.

Her clients, including St. Mary's First Nation, have been in consultations with the provincial government.

"The main reactions are dismay and anger over the approvals coming so suddenly and with basically no warning," said Nouvet.

"None of the Maliseet Chiefs support the project."

That was echoed in a press release from the Maliseet Nation late on Thursday night.

It stated the elected chiefs of the six Maliseet communities were "angered by the government of New Brunswick's rushed approval of the Sisson Mine."

"Our members will be heartbroken by this approval," said Chief Candice Paul of St. Mary's First Nation.



President and CEO of Northcliff Resources, Chris Zahovskis, said the project had received a significant amount of positive response from First Nations.

"We have tried to work with the government in good faith," added Chief Gabriel Atwin of Kingsclear First Nation.

"This sudden approval leaves me wondering how serious the government is about addressing Maliseet concerns.

These comments stand in contrast to how the company's top executive characterized the support the company had among First Nations.

Chris Zahovskis, the president and chief executive officer of Northcliff Resources, said "we've received, we feel, a significant amount of positive support" from First Nations.

'Disappointing and frustrating'

Another group that took part in Sisson consultations said it's recently been excluded from the talks.



The Sisson mine project includes a tailings pond and ore processing plant, covering 12.5 square kilometre of Crown land. (Northcliff Resources Ltd.)

"The Mi'gmaq have not been invited to sit with the province or proponent to discuss this project for close to a year," Chief George Ginnish of the Mi'gmaq Chiefs wrote.

"To date, the process with the province has been disappointing and frustrating."

The provincial government said it was satisfied with the review and consultation process.

"This has been a long time, this has been a lot of consultation going on," said Environment Minister Brian Kenny.

"If you take a look at the recommendations, there's a lot of protection for environment."

The federal Environmental Impact Assessment is still ongoing, and must be approved before the tungsten-molybdenum mine can move forward.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/sisson-mine-aboriginal-1.3350150>

Sisson mine conditions: 5 things you need to know

Environmental assessment gets provincial green light, but Northcliff Resources must meet 40 conditions

By Julianne Hazlewood, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 05, 2015 6:30 AM AT Last Updated: Dec 05, 2015 6:30 AM AT



The Sisson mine project includes a tailings pond and ore processing plant, covering 12.5 square kilometre of Crown land. (Northcliff Resources Ltd.)

It wasn't a big surprise that the province [approved the environmental impact assessment of the Sisson mine](#) on Thursday.

Earlier this year, [Energy and Mines Minister Donald Arseneault signalled the proposed open-pit tungsten and molybdenum mine](#), 60 kilometres north of Fredericton, was on its way to becoming a reality

However, the approval comes with several conditions.

The 40 measures largely include more monitoring and additional approvals in order for the project to move forward.

The company behind the massive mining proposal, Northcliff Resources, needs to meet all conditions before it can build the mine and it must do that within a five-year timeframe.

Here's what you need to know:

1. The bottom line

There are a few environmental impact assessment conditions that focus on trying to ensure Northcliff Resources has the funds to build the project and restore the site after it shuts down.

It states the company must submit a financial security plan within the next six months.

Another condition says Northcliff Resources is financially on the hook if there are "any catastrophic events, including cleaning up any environmental impacts."

CBC News has previously reported on [concerns about the costs associated with the project](#), raised by a review commissioned by the government.

As for Northcliff Resources' current financial situation, the company says it does not have the funds to build the \$579-million project.

The president and CEO, Chris Zahovskis, told CBC News he expects the environmental impact assessment approval will help with the financing process.

2. Tailings pond measures

Conservation groups and some people living near the proposed mine have voiced concerns the project could end up being another massive tailings pond disaster, similar to the [breach at the Mount Polley mine in B.C. last year](#).

The conditions state there needs to be revised modelling for the tailings storage facility seepage, and a monitoring plan.

It also says Northcliff Resources must set up an independent tailings review board to evaluate the tailings storage facility.

The board is supposed to include at least two qualified geotechnical engineers and one other engineer or geoscientist.

3. After the mine closes

An earlier story by CBC News revealed the system proposed to treat tailings water [after the open-pit mine shuts down is "known to fail,"](#) according to a Sisson mine cost review commissioned by the provincial government.

Environmental impact assessment condition number 29 says a "conceptual closure and post-closure monitoring program will be developed."

However, it doesn't get into specific targets or parameters that the monitoring program should include.

4. First Nations land

First Nations groups involved in consultations with the province on the mine are [not pleased about the Sisson approval, to put it mildly.](#)

Essentially, First Nations groups involved in talks say the approval came in the midst of discussions about the project. As a result, they say the move has soured what was becoming a positive relationship with the government.

The conditions laid out by the province do incorporate First Nations consultation, saying indigenous people must be notified of the construction schedule and be involved in developing a monitoring system for the mine.



Chris Zahovskis, president and CEO of Northcliff Resources, says the company doesn't have the money to build the project yet, but he believes the environmental impact assessment approval will help with financing the Sisson mine.

But more interestingly, it says Northcliff Resources must "secure appropriate land tenure for areas that will be occupied."

According to First Nations groups, who never ceded the right to that land, reaching a land agreement with the government is nowhere close to complete.

It's unclear when and how the company will be able to reach that land condition.

5. The feds still need to weigh in

The conditional approval from the province does not mean the project has been given the ultimate green light.

The federal Environment Minister, Catherine McKenna, will still need to give her stamp of approval, after the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency completes its environmental review, but that doesn't seem to be moving at a very quick pace.

The agency says it's waiting for information about the environmental effects of the project from Northcliff Resources. The CEAA has been waiting for at least two months.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/sisson-eia-conditions-5-things-1.3352162>

Moose population in Manitoba on sharp decline, province called to act

Following a historically high population of 45,000, there are now less than 20,000 moose in the province

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 05, 2015 3:12 PM CT Last Updated: Dec 05, 2015 7:45 PM CT



The Manitoba chapter of the Wildlife Society is calling on the province to help stop the sharp decline in the moose population, which the society says is most severe in southern areas. (Robert F. Bukaty/Associated Press file photo)

Moose in Manitoba are in trouble, and the province's chapter of The Wildlife Society is urging the provincial government to slow down drastic declines in the species' population.

There are less than 20,000 moose in Manitoba in 2015, according to the society — less than half of what the population was when it was at its historical high of 45,000.

On Nov. 25, the society sent an open letter to the Manitoba government, asking for a strategy for co-operation, management and resource sharing between indigenous and licensed harvesters, in co-operation with habitat and disease management programming to combat the decline, which the society says especially affects the southern half of the province.

"Anywhere that roads go, basically moose are in serious decline, or have declined to the point where there is no viable population. There's no huntable population for either licensed hunters or aboriginal hunters," said Jack Dubois, co-chair of the Manitoba chapter of the Wildlife Society's conservation affairs committee.

Dubois said hunting is significantly contributing the the decline, but disease and predators also play a part.

"[And] increased access via logging roads ... development roads. It allows ... hunters to get at the moose population easier," he said.

Dubois says he considers the moose population a symbol of the health of Manitoba's ecosystem, noting the province has some of the largest areas of the Boreal forest that are left in tact.

"This decline is a sign there are serious things wrong out there and we should be concerned ... because a healthy environment is something that sustains everyone, both economically [and] spiritually, particularly for First Nations people," he said.

"Hunters are concerned. First Nations are concerned. We're very concerned."

Around five years ago, while working for Manitoba Conservation Dubois helped broker a deal with First Nations leaders in Duck Mountain, north of the Winnipeg River, which is one of the most affected areas, to stop hunting moose.

"They have taken the unprecedented step in those areas ... to ask their own communities to cease hunting moose to allow them to recover which really is virtually unprecedented in Canada that that's happened and it has happened here in Manitoba," he said.

"We'd like to see the government take advantage of that goodwill that's out on the landscape of all parties, and really renew and increase their efforts."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/moose-population-in-manitoba-on-sharp-decline-province-called-to-act-1.3352564>

Student running length of Enbridge's Line 9 to raise awareness



A woman is running from Sarnia to Montreal to protest the Enbridge Line 9 pipeline. Sean Irvine has details.

CTV London

Published Friday, December 4, 2015 3:39PM EST

Last Updated Friday, December 4, 2015 5:07PM EST

One woman is tracing the path of Enbridge's Line 9 from Sarnia to Montreal - on foot - to raise the alarm about the controversial pipeline.

Twenty-two-year-old University of Waterloo student Rachel Thevenard will travel the length of the pipeline, which has been the focus of concerns from First Nations and environmentalists for years.

Thevenard began her journey with the blessing and support of the Aamjiwnaang First Nation.



She is trying to bring awareness to fears the pipeline could rupture, like a 2010 incident in Michigan that saw three million litres of crude oil spilled into the Kalamazoo River,

"So I might as well run against Line 9, while communities can still be made aware and still have a chance to fight, and have it shut down like it should be," Thevenard says.

But efforts to shut it down may already be a lost.

After years of talks, meetings and court appearances, Enbridge received approval from regulators to reverse the flow through the line.

And, just in the past few days, Alberta crude was delivered through the pipeline from Sarnia to Quebec.

Enbridge spokesperson Ken Hall says, "Oil has been delivered as far as our Montreal terminal, and the first shipments of oil to the refining customers in Quebec are happening in the near future."

But, Thevenard says the fight is not over and with First Nations support, she hopes to generate funds to continue the court battle with Enbridge.

It's an effort appreciated by members of multiple bands, who say Line 9 violates their land on jurisdictional and environmental levels.

Vanessa Gray of the Aamjiwnaang First Nation says, "This company is violating the lands that indigenous people have traditionally lived on."

Thevenard expects her 'Run of Line 9' will take four to six weeks, while court challenges to the pipeline itself will likely take much longer.

Direct Link: <http://london.ctvnews.ca/student-running-length-of-enbridge-s-line-9-to-raise-awareness-1.2687252>

Why Northern Gateway is probably dead

With climbing costs as well as aboriginal and environmental opposition, the future of the pipeline is up in the air. **Justine Hunter** and **Carrie Tait** report



Douglas Channel, the proposed termination point for an oil pipeline in the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project, is pictured in an aerial view in Kitimat, B.C., on Tuesday January 10, 2012.

JUSTINE HUNTER AND CARRIE TAIT

VICTORIA and CALGARY The Globe and Mail Last updated: Saturday, Dec. 05, 2015
11:23AM EST

Along the proposed route of the Northern Gateway pipeline, nothing is moving.

There is no clearing, mowing, grading, trenching, drilling, boring or blasting. Industry analysts have almost stopped asking questions because interested parties – contractors, engineering firms and others – have moved on to more realistic prospects. Meanwhile, the estimated cost of the project has climbed to \$7.9-billion, while not one of the 209 conditions attached to its environmental certificate has been checked off as complete.

After spending half a billion dollars in an effort to win the right to build a 1,100-kilometre pipeline to carry Alberta oil-sands bitumen to tidewater, Enbridge Inc. is understandably reluctant to tell its shareholders that the effort has been for naught. In fact, the company insists that the project is not dead.

But the commitment from the federal Liberals to impose an oil-tanker ban off of British Columbia's north coast, in addition to promised tougher environmental assessments, already provides a draft of the project's obituary.

Senior players in western Canada's oil patch quietly wrote Northern Gateway off some time ago, but they are now comfortable publicly dismissing it.

Steve Williams, Suncor Energy Inc.'s chief executive officer, said Northern Gateway is "not executable" in its current form, despite winning federal approval. More work must be done with First Nations, he said.

TransCanada Corp.'s Energy East proposal looks more promising, Mr. Williams added. "It is a complicated and long pipeline, but I think you've got to say that's probably where betting money would be at the moment," he said.

Investors long ago dropped Northern Gateway from their calculations of Enbridge's financial future, and the oil and gas industry quietly started looking for new prospects three years ago, said Laura Lau, a senior vice-president at Brompton Funds in Toronto. Her funds own Enbridge shares.

"They probably see a higher probability in Energy East," Ms. Lau said. "A lot of the pipe is in the ground. And it is made-in-Canada. It is almost like a nation-building exercise."

Enbridge has until the end of 2016 to get shovels in the ground. But the political landscape has changed dramatically.



Environmentalists and many First Nations along the pipeline path strongly oppose Enbridge's plans.

The B.C. Liberal government has been cold to the project amid public opposition. There are nine court challenges from First Nations and environmentalists before the Federal Court of Appeal. However, Premier Christy Clark always maintained an exit strategy that kept some shred of optimism afloat: If Ottawa and Alberta played it right, B.C. could be won over. But that now looks unlikely.

In May, Alberta voters elected Rachel Notley's New Democratic Party. Ms. Notley vowed during the campaign to withdraw provincial support of the Northern Gateway pipeline. Her government has tried to walk the commitment back in recent months, saying the project is simply not worth an investment of political capital.

Then in October, voters ousted the federal Conservative government, which had deemed Northern Gateway to be in "the national interest." In its place is a Liberal government that is showing little love for the project. The Liberals have promised to subject existing oil-sands pipeline proposals to tougher environmental assessments. Enbridge won't have to start from the beginning, but it will not have an easy path to the cabinet's final decision.

In the meantime, Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline expansion bid and the Energy East project are absorbing the attention of politicians and bureaucrats looking for a solution to getting Alberta oil to tidewater.

Enbridge officials say they remain busy with aboriginal consultation along the pipeline route and have filed progress reports on 15 of the 209 conditions with the National Energy Board (NEB). Ivan Giesbrecht, a spokesman for Northern Gateway, said more measurable progress will be made once a firm date for construction is set.

But there is no point building the pipeline to the West Coast if the product can't get out of port.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has directed Transport Minister Marc Garneau to formalize an oil-tanker ban on B.C.'s north coast. The Northern Gateway route would bring Alberta oil to the northern coastal community of Kitimat, B.C., to be loaded onto supertankers bound for overseas markets. If the ban is imposed, that route is bound for a dead end.



Rio Tinto Alcan's smelter is the proposed termination point for Enbridge's Northern Gateway pipeline in Kitimat, B.C.

Mr. Giesbrecht said the company will be consulting its lawyers to see if a tanker ban can be overturned. "We have 28-plus aboriginal equity partners who have an inescapable economic right to be consulted by the government on how a tanker moratorium would impact them. We are very much looking forward to chat with the federal government."

An expert in maritime law warns that it would not be easy to implement a tanker ban.

Robert Hage, a senior fellow at the University of Ottawa's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, said a ban would probably include Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound. That is "not encouraging" for Enbridge, he said, but a legislated ban would probably raise the ire of the United States, while a less contentious "mariner's notice" would not have the force of law.

A better approach would be to hit the pause button on the promised ban, he said, and first take a broader look at how Canada can get its energy to market – a discussion that must include aboriginal Canadians.

One of the leading opponents of Northern Gateway is Chief Councillor Ellis Ross of the Haisla Nation. Although Enbridge says it is making progress with aboriginal communities along the route, the Haisla have slammed the door shut in their Kitimat-area territory.

However, Mr. Ross is not ready to declare the war over. “I am sure they can deliver the ban, but I’m skeptical about the timeline around that – everyone celebrates too early,” he said.

Mr. Garneau did not respond to requests for an interview. His staff said he needs more time to learn the file before addressing future plans.

Gaétan Caron, who chaired the NEB for seven years and spent 35 years at the organization before retiring last spring, believes that Northern Gateway still has a chance. Ironically, it is First Nations, which have led the opposition in B.C., that hold the power to revive it.

“The journey toward reconciliation with indigenous people of Canada is a long one and a difficult one – and a worthwhile one,” Mr. Caron said. Northern Gateway could be a small part of the reconciliation: “That would depend if there is a change, correspondingly and simultaneously, in terms of the relationship between Enbridge and indigenous people.”

For now, he said, he is not ready to declare the project dead. “Until I read in the paper ... that Enbridge has abandoned its plan to build Northern Gateway, it is an open possibility. Not an easy one, but it is one.”

With a report from Jeff Lewis in Calgary

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/why-the-northern-gateway-project-is-probablydead/article27620342/>

Battle flares over including Indigenous peoples in global climate change deal

[National News](#) | December 4, 2015 by [Brandi Morin](#)



Brandi Morin and Jorge Barrera**APTN National News**

Climate change negotiations were set to continue into the Paris night Friday amid an unfolding battle over including a reference to Indigenous peoples in the final text of the expected global agreement.

Chief Wilton Littlechild, who recently returned from Paris, said he was hopeful the final text of the climate change agreement would include a reference to Indigenous people.

Littlechild, whose experience in UN negotiations stems back to his time helping to write the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, said there's been a back and forth between countries as to what to include in the final agreement.

"Yesterday (Thursday) we were in serious danger of (a reference to Indigenous peoples) being deleted, but now we are back in," said Littlechild, in an interview with *APTN National News*.

A report Friday from a delegate in Paris stated the reference to Indigenous peoples was still in limbo, but negotiations were expected to continue into the night.

Representatives from about 150 countries, along with about 40,000 delegates from about 195 countries, are currently negotiating a new global agreement on climate change at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) in Paris. Part of the negotiations aim to create a global agreement on climate change so the planet's warming does not surpass 2C above temperature levels that existed before the industrial revolution.

Indigenous peoples in Canada are already feeling the brunt of environmental changes caused by climate change. Canada is currently warming at twice the global average, but warming is occurring at an even higher rate in the North.

The Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut are already starting to notice extensive permafrost melting which is creating increasingly widespread infrastructure problems.

As part of a wider change in tone, Canada has been one of the leading global voices on the importance of including Indigenous peoples in proposed solutions to combat climate change. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was only one of two world leaders to mention Indigenous peoples during speeches at the conference, said Littlechild.

Littlechild said Canada and the U.S. both supported the reference to Indigenous peoples in the text. When the paragraph that included the reference was expanded to include human rights, women's rights, gender rights and a mention of "occupied territories," the U.S. and other states began to express resistance.

The move threatened to basically sever the reference to Indigenous peoples from the text, said Littlechild.

Then a proposal was put on the table to move a reference to Indigenous peoples into the preamble of the text's final agreement, which Littlechild said would have allayed some of the concerns.

"There were some states who did not want to refer to collective rights, then that meant deleting Indigenous peoples rights," said Littlechild. "So there was a lot of negotiating strategies that were being adopted by a number of states. At the end of the day Canada supported our position that it should be the rights of indigenous peoples."

Littlechild said negotiations still have a long way to go.

The chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) Okalik Egeesiak, one of delegates attending COP21 on behalf of the Inuit in Paris said climate change is not just an environmental issue, but also one about human rights.

"The melting of the Arctic is impacting all aspects of Inuit life therefore the final text must make the rights of Indigenous peoples operative and keep it in.... We have the right to be cold" said Egeesiak, in a statement.

A First Nations woman representing her home community of Beaver Lake Cree Nation in Alberta as an Indigenous delegate also expressed concern with the way things were unfolding. She said the removal of the operative paragraph in Article 2.2 signified the erasure of the existence of Indigenous peoples and front line communities.

"Here we sit on the outside as the worlds states debate and decide where our rights fit," said Crystal Lameman. "The issue we take as Indigenous peoples is that our rights are founded in the rights of nature which is the essence of who we are and the very existence of our ways of knowing and being ... We belong in this treaty, we have a place in this discussion. Our future and that of our children is not up for negotiation."

The negotiations are expect to conclude on Dec. 11. The climate change talks began in earnest on Nov. 30.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/12/04/battle-continues-over-inclusion-of-indigenous-peoples-in-global-climate-change-agreement/>

Opening the Canadian Arctic

Inuit worry about waning sea ice and rising ship traffic in the Northwest Passage

By Leyland Cecco in Iqaluit, Canada, for Al Jazeera America

Published on Sunday, December 6, 2015

Flowing deeply between ice and rock, the waters of the high Canadian Arctic have been unforgiving for centuries to those who dreamed of a quicker trade route between Asia and Europe.

Expeditions to find the fabled Northwest Passage usually ended in failure, if not death. Perhaps the most infamous was British explorer [John Franklin's](#) fourth attempt, launched in 1845, whose crew was stranded for years and, it's rumored, succumbed to cannibalism.

"The South has always been fascinated with the North and had a great imagination about it," says Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory, an Inuk poet of Greenlandic and Canadian heritage.

This imagination somehow failed to account for the people who actually lived on the land, ice and water that separated the two continents.

"The middle part was seen as this inconvenient emptiness," says Williamson Bathory.

While the thick sea ice blanketing the region for much of the year frustrated traders, it long served as a bridge for the Inuit, connecting them to neighboring communities and hunting locations inaccessible during warmer months.

Now it is climate change that is unforgiving.



Early sea ice begins to form near the end of October in Clyde River, a small community on the east coast of Baffin Island.

Ice that was once present year round is gone. Hunters say currents under ice floes are becoming increasingly unpredictable. Withering sea ice from an ever-warmer world is not only changing the landscape the Inuit relied on for their sustenance and culture; for the first time in recorded history, the waning sea ice has opened up the Northwest Passage to commercial traffic.

While world leaders meet in Paris for the United Nations Conference on Climate Change and Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau issues [dire warnings](#) about the Arctic, the

country's Inuit worry they will be sidestepped when it comes to administering, monitoring and protecting the passage.

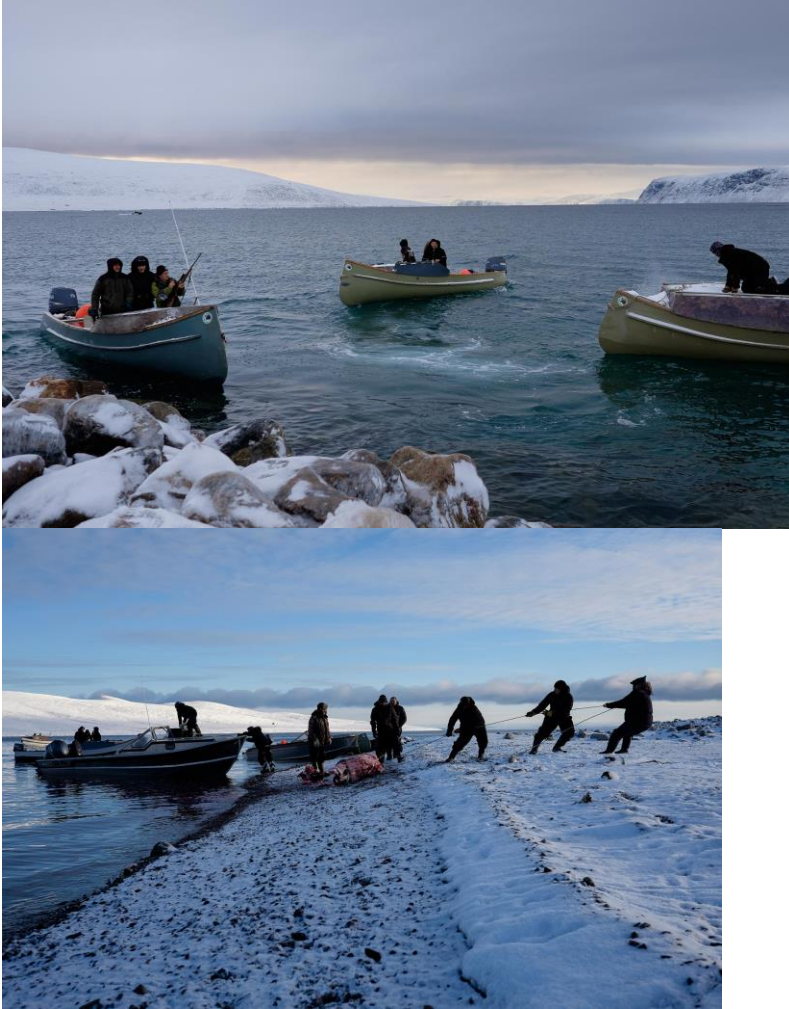
“We have never been the people sitting at a table. We’ve never been accorded that role,” says Aaju Peter, an Inuit activist based in Iqaluit. “It is continuously a lack of understanding or lack of respect or a lack of seeing Inuit as equal partners or autonomous.” At present, the Inuit have no formalized way to flag environmental concerns. An agreement between the Inuit and the federal government to form a marine council, through which the Inuit would advise the federal government, has yet to come to fruition, after years of false starts.

In the hamlet of Clyde River, 280 miles above the Arctic Circle, worries of an oil spill hang heavy over the region. Sheltered in a bay, the community is on the east coast of Baffin Island, where ships pass on their way into the passage.

“An oil spill would mean our main food source would be contaminated and not suitable for consumption. It would mean our way of life would basically change forever,” says Niore Iqalukjuak, the manager of the Clyde River Hunters and Trappers Organization. “Hunting is how everyone gets food for their families.”

In the community, like so many others in the North, more than half the diet consists of fresh game. The animals hunted by the residents, like narwhal, cover large distances in their migrations. A spill would have lasting effects on vulnerable marine populations.





A hunter inside a fjord, top left. Hunters prepare to hunt narwhal after a pod was spotted entering the sheltered bay near Clyde River, and hauling the carcass of a narwhal, a principal source of food in the community.

Even with the sea ice melting earlier and freezing later, the route remains fraught with perils for ships. The freezing of sea spray on the top of a ship, known as icing, can leave a vessel top-heavy and make it capsize. Growlers — icebergs sitting low in the water and difficult to spot — are notorious for sinking ships. Rocks and rogue waves are also a hazard.

Oil tankers like the [Exxon Valdez](#) often capture the public imagination and fear. But cargo ships pose a danger as well. In 2004 the Malaysian-flagged [Selendang Ayu](#) was grounded in a storm off the Aleutian Islands. Carrying 133 million pounds of soybeans, the ship broke in two, spilling more than 8,000 barrels of fuel oil.

“The U.S. Coast Guard didn’t even attempt a recovery of the oil because they had no facilities or personnel,” says Michael Byers, a legal scholar and an Arctic specialist at the University of British Columbia and the author of “Who Owns the Arctic?”

That was on the southern coast of Alaska. Handling a spill would be even more difficult farther north. At present, there is no technology able to separate oil from sea ice. If a spill occurred, ocean currents would likely push the oil or contaminants under the ice, where it would be impossible to track or remove.

“We can’t afford to have an oil spill in the Canadian Arctic,” Byers says. Trudeau recently formalized a [moratorium](#) on crude oil tanker traffic along the northern coast of British Columbia, but he has remained silent on the environmental risks of ships using the Northwest Passage.



Source: [Department of Environment and Natural Resources](#), "Trends in shipping in the Northwest Passage and the Beaufort Sea," May 2015. Map by Alex Newman/Al Jazeera America.

The last few years of weakening ice in the passage have led to a number of commercial shipping firsts in quick succession. In 2013 the Nordic Orion crossed the Northwest Passage, assisted by an icebreaker — a first for a non-ice-strengthened bulk carrier. Traveling from Vancouver to Finland via the Arctic instead of the Panama Canal, it shortened the journey by four days and 1,000 nautical miles. Just a year later and unassisted by an icebreaker, the Nunavik carried mineral ore from Quebec to China through the vaunted passage.

There is no shipping boom — yet. Last year 14,000 ships passed through the [Panama Canal](#), producing \$2 billion in revenue for the Panamanian government. Only 50 transited the Northwest Passage.

But as the summer ice melt extends, commercial shipping through the North is becoming increasingly viable. “I’m certainly expecting that in the next 10 to 20 years, regular late summer, early fall shipping traffic will be considered normal in Canada’s Arctic,” says Byers.



Women from Pond Inlet participate in a parka-making workshop at the Piqqusilirivvik cultural school in Clyde River, top. Laakuluk Williamson Bathory with her daughter, Arnatuk, left and enjoying a meal in her cabin. *(Click to enlarge images)*

In 2007 the mass melting of sea ice reignited Canadian interest in the Northwest Passage and was a cornerstone of then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper's [Arctic Sovereignty](#)

campaign, which aimed to reassert Canada's legal claims to Arctic waters. The Canadian government argues the waters around its northern archipelago are internal, rebuffing U.S. objections that they are international waters. To strengthen its case for sovereignty, Canada cites the use and inhabitation of the North by Inuit for millennia.

Much of the waterway passes through Nunavut, an Inuit region of Canada, created by a historic land claims agreement between the Inuit and the federal government in 1993. Granted territory status in 1999, Nunavut occupies 733,594 square miles — a fifth of Canada's land mass. Through the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, the Inuit ceded all treaty rights granted under the Canadian Constitution in exchange for environmental stewardship and the right to hunt and trap on the land and water as they have for thousands of years.

Despite pinning its claims to the Arctic on the Inuit, the Canadian government has been largely absent in terms of development and community engagement. For years, Inuit communities have been promised deep-water ports, infrastructure projects and money to combat food and housing crises. The cost of running cargo planes is largely unaffordable, so cargo ships traveling from Montreal to Iqaluit remain the lifeblood of the North, delivering building supplies and food. Iqaluit, on the southern edge of Baffin Island, is accessible for just a short period in the summer when Frobisher Bay is clear of ice. There are no operational deep-water harbors in Nunavut, so cargo has to be offloaded to barges — a process that takes weeks at a time.



Supplies to Clyde River, Canada, arrive via cargo ship. *(Click to enlarge images)*

Byers speaks to audiences around the world about the Northwest Passage and has found that the only argument non-Canadians take seriously is Inuit use and occupancy. But he has yet to hear the same degree of responsiveness from successive Canadian governments, presumably because it would take billions of dollars to resolve the crises the Inuit face.

“It would be widely regarded as hypocritical if they were invoking the Inuit to support Canadian sovereignty [at] the same time they were letting them down,” he says.

To date, none of the promises made to Nunavummiut have materialized. Trudeau, who was sworn in as prime minister on Nov. 4, has pledged to accelerate search-and-rescue capacity and to provide more funding for Inuit-based programs [to remedy](#) what his Liberal Party sees as neglect for nearly a decade under the Conservative Party.

“The social, economic and health crises in Nunavut are worse now than they were 10 years ago,” says Byers. The federal government spent “a small amount of money on housing but nowhere near what was needed to address the problems.”

Even before the route opened to commercial traffic, the first clash over it between Inuit and the federal government arose in 2009. Amid the headiness of Canada’s Arctic claims, a Conservative member of Parliament introduced a motion to rename the Northwest Passage the Canadian Northwest Passage.

The move outraged residents in Nunavut. Paul Kaludjak, at the time the president of Nunavut Tunngavik, the Inuit organization responsible for overseeing and implementing the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, spoke before Parliament. “We are from Nunavut. ‘Nunavut’ means ‘our land’ and not anyone else’s transit way,” he testified. “The term ‘Northwest Passage’ raises an immediate question — northwest of where and of what? The reference point seems to be London, England, and that, I think, is the mindset we are trying to get away from.”



Clyde River has a population of around 970. (*Click to enlarge images*)

Current Nunavut Tunngavik President Cathy Towtongie is equally clear where the Inuit stand. “The first preamble of our agreement says Inuit hold sovereignty for Canada. It’s written right into the agreement,” she says.

A focal point for Inuit concern is Lancaster Sound, the rich waters connecting Parry Channel with the Northwest Passage. For generations, the Inuit have called it Tallurutiup Tariunga, for the rocks rising out of the water that resemble the traditional chin tattoos on Inuit women.

“It’s really important to see the Arctic, specifically Lancaster Sound, as a dynamic place. The animals are traveling in and out of those waters. The waters are very kinetic. There’s

currents going in and out of there all the time. The people are going in and out of there, living there, traveling there,” says Williamson Bathory. Lancaster Sound has been flagged for oil exploration, angering the communities in the area. With the influx of commercial ships in record numbers, there are worries that its ecosystem could be irreparably changed.

In 2007, Harper famously declared that in order to preserve the sovereignty of Lancaster Sound, Canada and the Inuit needed to use it or lose it.

“There was no thinking of our people having lived and died for thousands of years in the area,” says Lazarus Kalluk, an interpreter from Pond Inlet, a small community near Lancaster Sound. “Sometimes they don’t see us as Canadians.”



"We've been waiting 40 years for a harbour," says Lazarus Kalluk, left, an Inuktitut interpreter. Future Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, center, meets with Hunter Tootoo, the newly appointed Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and Canadian Coast Guard at a campaign rally in Iqaluit prior to the federal election. *(Click to enlarge images)*

In addition to frustrations with government policy, he and others are worried about invasive species that could enter the area through [shipping traffic](#). “We don’t know what could happen to the ecosystem if something new is introduced by accident on the hulls of these ships,” he says. There is legislation in place to prevent ballast water from being dumped in certain regions, but he is concerned that rules might not be heeded and enforced. Byers supports this view, noting that with such limited infrastructure and monitoring capabilities in the North, policing ship traffic and dumping is difficult. There is a constellation of unknowns for the communities, given that international ships have never moved through the Arctic en masse.

Sea ice, a mainstay of the North that inextricably binds Inuit to the environment, looks increasingly vulnerable. Icebreakers and ships with reinforced hulls for icebreaking rend the floes crucial for hunting. Hunters fear they will lose their ability to travel unfettered across the ice, a key mode of transportation for much of the year. Depending on how close to shore ships travel, icebreaking could damage the hunt. “There aren’t any shipping lanes established yet,” says Byers.

Recently, when the Baffinland mining company, which has large interests in the area, proposed shipping ore 10 months of the year from Pond Inlet on Baffin Island to Germany, it met [sharp resistance](#).



A resident walks down a back street in Clyde River on an October afternoon. (*Click to enlarge images*)

“Ice is an essential part of life in the North. For people, for polar bears, for seals and other animals in the North, ice is a bridge — both metaphorically to the past and present Inuit values and activities, also actually as a fact,” wrote Chairman Hunter Tootoo in a report for the [Nunavut Planning Commission](#). “Ice physically links Inuit to their culture and values.” He now serves as the minister of fisheries, ocean and Canadian coast guard for the federal government.

“Most these ships that are coming, the international voyages, will go straight through. They’ll be on tight schedules. They’re trying to save time and money, and they’re not going to stop en route,” says Byers. Revenue from shipping would likely be directed to the federal government. Despite shouldering most of the risk associated with commercial shipping through Arctic waters, the economic benefit to Inuit would be very little.

Instead, the Inuit feel they put up social and environmental capital to fund Canadian expansion of the Northwest Passage.

“I think that since explorers started showing up in the Arctic, it’s always been this place for Southerners to test their mettle,” says Williamson Bathory. “And therefore, everything about the North is conquerable, including the environment, the animals and the people.”

Direct Link: <http://projects.aljazeera.com/2015/12/nunavut-northwest-passage/>

Calls to protect one of the last “old growth” forests in Quebec

By [Marc Montgomery](#) | english@rcinet.ca

Monday 7 December, 2015

The northern areas of Canada while very sparsely populated are nonetheless the site of much activity by resource companies.

In northern Quebec, which holds an absolutely huge expanse of the boreal forest, one of the last “untouched” forests is in the Broadback Valley. Although forestry companies have voluntarily held off exploitation for the time being, the pressure for access into the previously untouched forest remains.

Much of the forested area of northern Quebec and the traditional territory of the [Waswanapi Cree](#) has been disturbed by a network of over 32,000 kilometres of access roads for forestry companies.

The Community of Waswanipi will no longer accept major forest access roads that will affect the Woodland Caribou, nor projects where the environmental impacts are unclear. This is our home: we’ll do anything that we can to protect it,” Chief Marcel Happyjack of the Waswanipi Cree



In 2010 Cree and Greenpeace erected a barrier on a development road into the Broadback forests reading “The road of destruction ends here. © Greenpeace

In fact, recent satellite images show some 90% of the province’s commercially viable forests have been intersected by roads and cut or fragmented by logging. Forestry companies have removed 40 million cubic metres of wood from the region.

“We are offering today a remarkable opportunity for Quebec to take a leadership position and be a champion of the fight against climate change by supporting the comprehensive protection of the Broadback forest. It is a necessary decision for the Cree people, a wise decision for Quebec and a smart decision for the world,” said Chief Happyjack,

Scientists have indicated the old growth forests, bogs, and soil absorb vast amounts of greenhouse gas and disturbing that only adds to climate change problems.

They say also that the woodland caribou and other animals need vast expanses of undisturbed and contiguous forest away from any human noise, in order to survive.



Broadback River and watershed. The Cree inhabitants say some 20,000 sq/km of the watershed and forest should be protected from logging and other development to protect the wildlife, especially caribou, and their own traditions and lives. © Radio-Canada- archives

[A report in 2012](#) showed that the two caribou herds, the Nottaway and Assinica, are no longer self-sustaining according to benchmarks set by the Federal Government under the terms of the Species at Risk Act.

A news release on Monday by the Waswanipi Cree, said public hearings by the provincial Environmental and Social Impact Review Committee (COMEX) to discuss construction of forest access roads into the Broadback have been postponed at the request of the Cree.

Only a little over five percent of Quebec forests have protection from development and the northern Cree asked seven years ago that 13,000 square kilometres of the Broadback be set aside from development. The number has since been increased to 20,000 square kilometres as we learn more about the need for vast contiguous protected zones for wildlife. Half of that area would consist of parks and protected areas, while the other half will consist of a special management zone.

In July, the provincial Liberal government announced they would protect about 5,400 square kilometres of the Broadback.

Direct Link: <http://www.rcinet.ca/en/2015/12/07/calls-to-protect-one-of-the-last-old-growth-forests-in-quebec/>

Nunavut, Greenland and ICC leaders deliver Arctic wish list for COP21 agreement

Inuit food security and recognition of traditional knowledge part of Arctic leaders recommendations

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 08, 2015 1:44 PM CT Last Updated: Dec 08, 2015 1:44 PM CT



Nunavut Premier Peter Taptuna, ICC Chair Okalik Egeesiak and Greenland Minister of Finance, Mineral Resources and Foreign Affairs Vittus Qukaukitsoq released a joint statement Tuesday at COP21 in Paris. (Submitted by Government of Nunavut)

Leaders from Nunavut, Greenland and the Inuit Circumpolar Council have sent out their wish list of what they want to see in a final agreement when the COP21 climate change conference ends this week in Paris.

Nunavut Premier Peter Taptuna, Greenland Minister of Finance, Mineral Resources and Foreign Affairs Vittus Qukaukitsoq and ICC Chair Okalik Egeesiak released a joint statement Tuesday. It coincides with Arctic Day at the Indigenous Peoples pavilion at the conference.

The leaders lay out nine points they are calling on all nations at COP21 to deliver to address the "acute impacts" the Arctic is experiencing from climate change, including stabilizing global greenhouse gas concentrations below 450 parts per million by volume to make certain global temperature increases will remain between 1.5 C and 2 C.

Their other recommendations include:

- recognizing and protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the values, interests, culture and traditions of the Peoples of the Arctic.
- ensuring equal access to the right to development, also for the Peoples of the Arctic.
- acknowledging the extremely high cost of living in the Arctic and not imposing further financial burden to Arctic regions.
- advocating the development and expansion of energy solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, also for areas like the Arctic.
- ensuring that Inuit food security is protected.
- promoting the need for adaptation action in areas that are disproportionately affected by climate change, such as the Arctic, and for sustainable funding to support such initiatives.
- recognizing the importance of Indigenous knowledge, its significant contribution to our understanding of climate change, and acknowledges its value being on par with scientific data.

"When it comes to climate change, Nunavut is one of the most vulnerable areas on Earth," said Taptuna in a news release.

Qujaukitsoq said Greenland has an important responsibility in promoting international climate research.

"Our joint Inuit voice and our traditional know-how from across the Arctic should be heard and included in international policy-making," he said in the release.

In an interview with CBC, ICC Chair Eegeesiak called on the Canadian government to provide more funding to help Inuit adapt to climate change.

"The Canadian government has invested quite a few million dollars to go to underdeveloped countries to help them with that and I hope that Inuit communities and Nunavut in this case will have access to those funds to help adapt and mitigate."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-wishlist-cop21-agreement-1.3355813>

David Suzuki: Healing humanity's grief in the face of climate change

by [David Suzuki](#) on December 8th, 2015 at 4:58 PM



David Suzuki. Kent Kallberg

The tragedy we're witnessing in so many places around the world is heartbreaking. Responses on the ground and in the media to events in Paris, Beirut, Syria, and elsewhere have ranged from inspiring to chilling. Too often, people express fear and distress as anger, suspicion, and scapegoating.

For many reasons and in many ways, people and nature are in distress. Quaker activist and author [Parker Palmer](#) implores us to ask, "What shall we do with our suffering?" The way we deal with our pain has critical implications. Whether we project it outward as war or murder or absorb it as despair and self-destruction, "Violence is what we get when we do not know what else to do with our suffering."

The interplay of environmental degradation and geopolitics has had alarming repercussions. Over the past decade alone, millions of people have been displaced by war, famine, and drought. The world is shifting rapidly as a result of climate change and

there's little doubt we'll see increasing humanitarian crises. We must face this new reality as a global community.

Climate change is one of the most destabilizing forces in human history. We must deal with carbon emissions but we must also deal with human suffering. In Canada, Inuit are feeling the impacts disproportionately. Ice appears much later in the season and melts earlier. Changing wildlife migration patterns disrupt community livelihoods, land-based activities, and cultural practices.

Cape Breton University Canada research chair Ashlee Cunsolo Willox is working with Inuit to understand their communities' climate-related mental and emotional health impacts, documenting anxiety, despair, hopelessness, and depression, increased family stress, drug and alcohol use, and suicide attempts. People are grieving for a way of life that is changing with the landscape.

Together with the Nunatsiavut communities of Labrador, Cunsolo Willox produced a documentary film, [*Attutauniujuk Nunami/Lament for the Land*](#). Residents describe how ice, when it forms, is often not thick enough to hunt, gather wood, or travel by snowmobile.

The land is part of who they are, a source of solace, peace, identity, and well-being. Hunting and fishing and spending time on the land help Inuit feel grounded and happy. When residents can't get out of town, they feel "stuck", "lost", and "less like people".

Although global warming discourse typically ignores our intense feelings and grief in the face of environmental change, Cunsolo Willox argues it can expand our capacity to act. "Re-casting climate change as the work of mourning means that we can share our losses, and encounter them as opportunities for productive and important work," she says. "It also provides the opportunity to stand up and publicly object to injustice." Shared experiences of grief can build solidarity, support healing and inspire collective action.

With the [Paris UN climate talks](#) underway, we have an opportunity to expand the conversation to include environmental grief and loss. Today's social and environmental leaders need to understand the psychological implications of a world in distress. Geographer and research scientist [Susanne Moser](#) predicts future leaders will need more than professional expertise and political savvy. They must be "steward, shepherd, arbiter, crisis manager, grief counselor, future builder."

Instead of knee-jerk reactions that so often accompany fear and emotional pain, what if we summoned the courage to experience our sadness, disorientation, and grief in all its fullness? More importantly, what if we did this together? The feelings surrounding change and loss highlight our shared vulnerability and expose our connections to one another. We can consciously foster a heightened sense of human and ecological fellowship.

The late environmental scientist [Donella Meadows](#) believed the process of experiencing feelings is far from trivial. “Feelings, like knowledge, don’t directly change anything. But if we don’t rush past the feelings or stuff them down, if we take time to admit even the most uncomfortable ones, to accept them, share them, and couple them with knowledge of what is wrong and how it might be fixed, then feelings and knowledge together are motors for change.”

The suffering we’re witnessing because of loss of land, culture, ways of life, and identity may portend what is to come for all of us. Now is the time to come together and decide how we will respond. Let’s make sure it’s the best humanity has to offer.

David Suzuki is a scientist, broadcaster, author and co-founder of the David Suzuki Foundation. Written with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation Senior Public Engagement Specialist Aryne Sheppard. Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org.

Direct Link: <http://www.straight.com/news/593276/david-suzuki-healing-humanitys-grief-face-climate-change>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

A free trade proposal for aboriginal communities



Welcome to Canada sign (Angela MacIvor/CBC)

Sunday December 06, 2015

The federal government has promised to build a new nation-to-nation relationship with aboriginal Canadians.

That promise [includes](#) a 500-million-dollar investment in First Nations education infrastructure, equitable funding for child and family services on reserves, and the removal of the two percent funding cap for First Nations programs.

Akwesasne Mohawk journalist Doug George-Kanentiio says he has [a better idea](#) for how to improve economic conditions in Aboriginal communities. He believes the answer has been under our noses since the negotiation of the [Jay Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation](#) back in 1794.

The full interview is available in the audio player above. The following portions have been edited for clarity and length.

You argue that Canada can improve economic conditions in aboriginal communities by formally recognizing the Jay Treaty, which was signed by the British and the Americans way back after the American Revolution. What does that treaty have to do with aboriginal economic prosperity?

The treaty specifically says that aboriginal people have the right to cross the international border with their goods-- their persons and their goods. And to us that meant that we had the right to control our own economic destinies.

So the treaty grants you the right of free passage across the border for you and your goods without being subjected to any toll. How does that compare to what's actually happening today?

It creates incredible tensions along the border, because the Canadian customs officials who are bound by policies passed in Ottawa, they vigorously enforce Canadian import rules. When we bring up Jay Treaty, they say, well, that doesn't apply here. It just leads to a lot of arguments and physical confrontations, and in a sad way, it has also led to the rise of a narco-smuggling culture that has come to dominate the economics of eastern Ontario and northern New York. Smuggling is rooted in the Jay Treaty, because Canada refuses to find another way so our people are bound to respond to market conditions, and they do... and it creates a whole network of Mohawk criminals. So many of our people, including my own brothers, have been incarcerated, because they maintain they have a right to do this under Jay Treaty and Canada says no.

You argue it would make strong economic sense for Canada to go back and recognize the Jay Treaty. Can you give us some tangible examples of economic activity that you believe would be activated if this treaty was recognized?

Sure. There's a big problem with food delivery services and aboriginal people and Inuit people getting adequate food -- and then being gouged when they do secure food that has to be transported at length. What we proposed at Akwesasne a generation ago in the mid-80s was the formation of a national native free trade zone, that would include native nations in the United States and Canada and would formally create an institution by which goods, ideas, and technologies could flow freely across the border. We would say that we could cut costs, administrative costs by having Akwesasne, for instance, because of our geographical locale, become a warehouse for things that are needed in the north and the west. We could transport those goods at considerably reduced costs from our community to those people who are in the greatest need.

It almost sounds like the creation of a Native American free trade agreement -- like NAFTA, but for aboriginal groups across the continent.

That's exactly right. And I think that's the key that's before us now. That can unlock enormous economic potential across aboriginal Canada, because we do sit on vital natural resources, but how do we get those resources from our territory to market without having to deal with and having to allocate the greater part of the profits from that to external agencies and companies? How do we control it ourselves?

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/the180/gene-editing-debating-the-usefulness-of-sci-fi-analogies-and-does-more-parental-leave-actually-help-women-1.3351174/a-free-trade-proposal-for-aboriginal-communities-1.3351469>

Canada to give aboriginals more say on resource projects: minister

Mon Dec 7, 2015 3:37pm EST

By David Ljunggren

OTTAWA (Reuters) - Canada will give aboriginal groups more say in discussions over natural resource projects located on their territory, which should help pave the way for major pipelines and mines, the country's new energy minister said on Monday.

The Liberal government, which took power last month, had pledged to toughen environmental assessments that critics said had been weakened under the former Conservative government.

Asked whether the new assessment process meant aboriginal interests could block development of a pipeline, Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr declined to give a direct response.

"We will consult leaders, we will consult communities, we will seek consensus," he said in an interview.

Low prices for oil and other commodities have hammered Canada's natural resource sector, which is shedding jobs.

The approval of at least two proposed pipelines - TransCanada Corp's Energy East and the expansion of Kinder Morgan Inc's Trans Mountain Pipeline - has been bogged down by protests, with aboriginal groups saying they have been marginalized by current rules for assessing projects.

Proponents say the pipelines are needed so Canadian oil can reach tidewater and fetch higher prices.

The Liberals stress the need for what they call "social license" and more consultations. Carr said he had forged close relationships with aboriginal communities and their leaders during his time with a business council in Manitoba.

"You have to go to communities genuinely and - in an open way - listen to what communities are saying. And that consultative process itself lays the foundation for community support for projects," he said.

Carr repeated the government's line that "no proponent of a pipeline that is currently under review will be asked to go to square one."

There would, however, be a transition process to the new rules, he said, though he declined to provide details.

Direct Link:

<http://ca.reuters.com/article/domesticNews/idCAKBN0TQ2GE20151207?sp=true>

Canada aboriginal head says development may be easier under new PM

OTTAWA | By [David Ljunggren](#) , Wed Dec 9, 2015 3:35pm EST



Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (L) stands with Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde during the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly in Gatineau, Canada, December 8, 2015.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's move to reach out to aboriginal groups could make it easier for natural resource companies to complete major projects, some of which are stalled, a senior indigenous leader said on Wednesday.

Trudeau, whose Liberals took power last month, told aboriginal chiefs on Tuesday he wanted to radically improve relations with the government, which were often tense under the former ruling Conservatives.

He also pledged more funding for an indigenous population plagued by crime, ill-health and poverty, and stressed the importance of aboriginal rights.

"We're totally optimistic and hopeful because the prime minister talked about building on a new relationship," said Perry Bellegarde, who heads the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), the umbrella group for the more than 600 aboriginal bands in Canada.

Asked whether Trudeau's positive tone could make resource development easier, Bellegarde said as long as firms "respect inherent rights, treaty rights and indigenous peoples' involvement, there could be ways to work through some of these concerns."

He noted that no major pipelines had been approved or built in Canada in recent years.

"If you start involving indigenous peoples in the development and design of any major operation from start to finish, that's the way to go," he said in an interview.

The key, he said, was for companies to forge good ties with indigenous peoples before breaking ground.

"If that positive relationship is built first, I think things could be done easier," he said.

Aboriginal groups - citing Supreme Court decisions as well as treaties signed with British settlers in past centuries - say they have significant rights over their traditional lands that Ottawa and resource companies often ignore.

Two proposed pipelines - TransCanada Corp's Energy East and the expansion of Kinder Morgan Inc's Trans Mountain Pipeline - have been opposed by some aboriginal communities.

Canada's new Minister of Natural Resources Jim Carr this week said Ottawa would give aboriginal groups more say in discussions over natural resource projects located on their territory, which should help pave the way for major pipelines and mines.

Carr, speaking to Reuters, did not say whether this meant the government considered aboriginal groups would have a veto over projects.

"We have the right to say 'yes' to projects and 'no' to projects. It's an inherent right," said Bellegarde.

(This version of the story corrects the name of the body to Assembly of First Nations from Association.)

Read more at Reuters <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-canada-aboriginals-idUSKBN0TS2OL20151209#LumgYBhTEVB3fqhF.99>

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

Nearly half of murdered indigenous women did not know or barely knew killers, Star analysis shows

A Star analysis suggests 44 per cent of the women were victims of acquaintances, strangers and serial killers. This finding is based on a Star review of publicly available information on more than 750 murder cases. Of that number, 224 murders remain unsolved.



A vigil held on Parliament Hill to call for a national inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women. At time of publication, the Star's research had identified 1,129 cases where an indigenous woman or girl was either murdered, died in suspicious circumstances, or is missing. Nearly half didn't know, or barely knew, their killers, analysis shows. (2014 file photo).

By: David Bruser Jim Rankin Joanna Smith Tanya Talaga Jennifer Wells Staff Reporters, Andrew Bailey Data Analyst, Published on Fri Dec 04 2015

In the seemingly ceaseless tragedy of murdered indigenous women, the country has been left with one crystal-clear impression: the overwhelming majority of those women were in some sort of relationship with their killers.

This is not true.

[A Toronto Star analysis](#) suggests 44 per cent of the women were victims of acquaintances, strangers and serial killers. This finding is based on a Star review of publicly available information on more than 750 murder cases. Of that number, 224 murders remain unsolved.

There are many public lists of murdered and missing indigenous women in Canada. The Star compiled those lists into a single database then set out to verify as much information as possible. Relying on newspaper clippings and court documents, the Star's database includes 1,129 names, dates and, when a case was solved, some information on the offenders.

Our review found 420 cases where details of the relationship between victim and offender were known. Some of them date to the 1960s. Of those:

- Half of the victims were domestically related to the perpetrator. This includes all types of family and partner connections.
- 16 per cent of the offenders were acquaintances; 15 per cent were strangers; and 13 per cent serial killers.

Aboriginal leaders who reviewed the Star's findings say they show that the killers cannot be easily profiled and that reasons why indigenous women make up a disproportionately high percentage of homicide victims are not so neatly diagnosed.

The Star also obtained details through an access-to-information request to suggest the "solved" rate is not as clear-cut as the public RCMP report into missing and murdered indigenous women suggests.

In two reports, the Mounties said the "known-to" category includes spouses, family members and acquaintances. The latter category can mean "close friends, neighbours, authority figures, business relationships, criminal relationships and casual acquaintances."

What is a casual acquaintance? A friend of a friend or someone met online? In how many cases did the victim know the perpetrator only briefly, meeting them only once?

The RCMP will not say.

From the start, Alberta's Cold Lake First Nation Chief Bernice Martial has not believed most indigenous women knew their killers and that they were mostly indigenous men: "I want the facts. I want the data. I want to see proof."

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde wants the definition of "known to" clarified.

"It could be the corner store grocery man, or whoever brings milk to the door. It doesn't necessarily mean the boyfriend," Bellegarde says.

"You need to break this down further and define it. The way you looked at it, only 50 per cent are in relationships. If the RCMP said it was 90 per cent — well, there is a discrepancy already. It is alarming — the transparency and openness."

In April, then aboriginal affairs minister Bernard Valcourt told First Nations chiefs that, in 70 per cent of the cases of murdered and missing aboriginal women, indigenous men had been the perpetrators.

“The notion of First Nations women only being killed by their boyfriends and spouses is a myth,” said Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler of Nishnawbe Aski Nation, which represents 49 northern Ontario First Nations.

Carolyn Bennett, the new indigenous and northern affairs minister, said she was “appalled” by Valcourt’s remarks.

“It was misleading for him to characterize it that way and I, at the time, was furious,” Bennett said.

RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson confirmed the number citing their database — even though the report issued by the Mounties last year had not noted the ethnicity of perpetrators. But Paulson added a caveat.



RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson says it's not the ethnicity of the offender that is relevant but the relationship between victim and offender with respect to prevention.

“It is not the ethnicity of the offender that is relevant, but rather the relationship between the victim and offender that guides our focus with respect to prevention,” Paulson wrote to Martial.

Most homicides involving female victims of all ethnicities involve family or intimate partner violence, Paulson added, but the rate is actually lower for aboriginal women — 62 per cent compared to 74 per cent for non-aboriginal women.

In its follow-up report, the RCMP said in the past couple of years, the offender was known to the victim in every solved homicide of an aboriginal woman in RCMP jurisdictions.

Since the RCMP found that aboriginal women are significantly more likely than other women to be killed by an acquaintance — 17 per cent of the aboriginal female homicides

involved casual acquaintances and 7 per cent criminal relationships — uncertainty surrounds hundreds of cases.

“You need to break this down further and define it,” said Bellegarde.

Are police forces working together, asks Bellegarde, by sharing correct information? And are there protocols to improve communications?

“This all speaks to the bigger realm of why there needs to be an inquiry coupled with an action plan,” he said.

Bennett, one of the ministers charged with establishing the national inquiry, said cases that involve family violence should be viewed through a wider lens.

“We’ve got to go way back upstream to actually look at the effects of colonization and residential schools on the indigenous population in Canada,” Bennett said.

Secrecy and the list

The Star shared its database findings with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police two months ago and on two occasions since to check the accuracy of its research. The Star also asked several questions about how the RCMP arrived at its findings.

In May 2014, the Star made an access to information request for the RCMP’s database of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls.

In early October 2015, some 16 months later, the RCMP released 2,000 pages related to work that led to its 2014 report. All names and personal details of the women and girls were redacted.

The RCMP cited several reasons for redacting information, including personal information, law enforcement investigations and information obtained in confidence. Their 2014 report notes that the Mounties were asked to sign an “Undertaking of Confidentiality” to obtain data from Statistics Canada and that other police services had to agree that Statistics Canada could share their data.

On Nov. 13, after more questions from the Star, Janice Armstrong, deputy commissioner of RCMP aboriginal policing, welcomed media efforts to investigate, saying the cases of murdered and missing aboriginal women require “a co-ordinated response that addresses the underlying root causes of violence.”

Yet none of our questions was answered. The RCMP database — notwithstanding the RCMP’s already published interpretations of it — remains a secret.

Seeking clarity on a local level presented its own challenges. On Aug. 13, the Star contacted the Winnipeg Police Service requesting an interview with Project Devote, an

integrated task force between the RCMP and Winnipeg police charged with the investigation of unsolved homicides and missing persons in Manitoba involving exploited and “at risk” persons. Ethnicity and gender are not predetermining factors for inclusion.

Across a period of more than three months, two trips to Winnipeg and repeated communications, including with the RCMP, Winnipeg police denied the request on Nov. 20. On that date, Winnipeg police did send a list of cases under investigation, but would not indicate which cases involved indigenous persons. Of a current case load of 28, including one male, the Star’s own research found 22 cases involving missing and murdered indigenous women. The number could be higher.

The lack of co-operation highlights the barriers to capturing accurately the necessary data. Asked how many members of Project Devote are indigenous, Winnipeg police responded via email that the “heritage of the investigators on the task force is irrelevant.”

The Ontario Provincial Police were also reluctant to answer questions about the deaths and disappearance of women in northern Ontario.

Police secrecy masks the scope of the problem, said Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler.

“What is the scope of the problem?” asks Fiddler. “There is really no definitive picture. If there was a collaborative effort we could get an accurate picture. There is no databank somewhere, no central place where you can find some answers. There is no co-ordinated effort. We know the Ontario Provincial Police has numbers, the RCMP has numbers and even the Native Women’s Association of Canada has numbers,” said Fiddler.

No one can answer simple questions: What is the status of these investigations? Which force is handling the investigations — the RCMP, the OPP or the Thunder Bay Police? Are they actively investigating these cases?



“What is the scope of the problem?” asks Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler. “There is really no definitive picture. If there was a collaborative effort we could

get an accurate picture. There is no databank somewhere, no central place where you can find some answers. There is no co-ordinated effort. We know the Ontario Provincial Police has numbers, the RCMP has numbers and even the Native Women's Association of Canada has numbers.”

Solve rates

As of November, the Star's research had identified 1,129 cases where an indigenous woman or girl was either murdered, died in suspicious circumstances, or is missing. It is by no means a complete list. In some cases, the Star could not verify details. For those reasons, the Star is sharing an aggregate level analysis of the cases.

In 130 cases — 78 of which were from British Columbia — the Star could not find information to verify the type of case (murdered or missing), nor any information to exclude them. Of the total, 937 cases are from 1980 to 2015. Looking at the solve rates of homicides, the annual ratio of unsolved to solved cases was higher during the 1980s and 1990s, and is gradually decreasing.

Overall, there are 768 murder cases with 20 identified as murder-suicides. Two hundred and twenty-four are unsolved and, of those, 186 involve killings since 1980.

The Star can't verify the RCMP's claim that 88 per cent of all aboriginal female homicide cases have been solved. The Star's analysis suggests a solve rate of 70 per cent.

The Star analysis also identified 180 unsolved cases between 1980 and 2012; the RCMP cited 120 cases.

The Mounties provided no explanations for the discrepancies.

The RCMP data came from police-reported figures from more than 300 different agencies. The Star analysis is based largely on media reports.

In her letter to the Star, Janice Armstrong, deputy commissioner of RCMP aboriginal policing, said commenting on the discrepancies would be “inappropriate,” citing differences in methodology and data sets.

A possible explanation can be found in the fine print of the 2014 RCMP report, which says solved cases include those where the suspect was “chargeable” but not charged. In other words, the police recommended the prosecutor lay charges but a charge may not have been laid.

How many homicide cases stalled with no one charged, tried or sent to jail? The RCMP will not say.

The phrase “suspect chargeable” appeared throughout the heavily censored 2,000-page document the Star obtained from the RCMP.

Should police lump such cases into the same category as those that came with convictions and certainty for the families of victims?

“When you take that strict interpretation of solved — that becomes an issue unto itself. This does not bring any peace to the family, if they are charged and not convicted. Basically, when they do that, there is no justice or healing or closure for the family. The family’s pain and hurt is still ongoing. . . . That has to be reviewed,” said Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde.

Behind the numbers

There are many public lists of murdered and missing indigenous women in Canada, some more detailed than others. The Star compiled a single database from those lists and then went about verifying as much of the information as possible.

Five Star journalists and two Star librarians searched and read through thousands of news stories, obituaries and online legal documents to check the status of cases.

New cases were added and some were removed after the research revealed, for example, that a missing woman had been found or that a murdered woman was not indigenous.

At time of publication, the Star’s research had identified 1,129 cases where an indigenous woman or girl was either murdered, died in suspicious circumstances, or is missing.

It is by no means a complete list. In some cases, the Star could not verify details. For those reasons, the Star is choosing to share an aggregate level analysis of the cases.

Star reporters David Bruser, Jim Rankin, Joanna Smith, Tanya Talaga and Jennifer Wells; librarians Astrid Lange and Rick Sznajder; database specialist Andrew Bailey; and demographic experts Hidy Ng and Matthew Cole were involved in the research and analysis.

Caveats, data at a glance

In 130 cases — 78 of which were from British Columbia — the Star could not find information to verify the type of case (murdered vs. missing), nor could the Star find any information to exclude them.

Of the 1,129 cases, 937 are from 1980 to 2015. Looking at solve rates for homicides, the ratio of unsolved to solved cases, by year, was higher in the 80s and 90s, and is decreasing gradually.

Overall, there are 768 murder cases, of which 20 were identified as murder/suicides. Of the murders, 224 are unsolved, with 186 of those cases involving killings since 1980.

Solved totals in the Star analysis do not include cases where an accused was acquitted, but they do count cases where an arrest has been made and a trial is pending, or in instances where an accused has died. The Star also included as solved cases where the outcome was unclear, such as a case where there was a trial but the outcome could not be determined.

There are 171 missing women and girls in the Star database, which is nearly identical to RCMP figures from 2014, which tallied 164 missing cases, dating back to the 50s.

Between 1980 and 2012, the solved rate in the cases of murdered indigenous women compiled by the Star is 70 per cent, which is much lower than the 88 per cent solve rate the RCMP reported in its groundbreaking 2014 report for the same time frame. The RCMP report cited a solve rate for non-aboriginal female homicides to be 89 per cent, based on an analysis of Canada-wide homicides from 1980 to 2012.

The ratio of unsolved to solved murders is decreasing. Murders of aboriginal women and girls peaked in 2005.

Another difference between the Star research and RCMP findings is the number of unsolved cases. The Star analysis identified 180 cases between 1980 and 2012. The RCMP cited 120 cases for that same time period.

It is unclear why there are such large differences. The RCMP data came from police-reported figures from more than 300 agencies. The Star analysis is based largely on media reports.

The Star shared a findings package with the RCMP and flagged the differences in letters to Commissioner Bob Paulson.

In a letter to the Star, RCMP Deputy Commissioner Janice Armstrong cited the differences in source material as a factor and wrote that it would therefore be “inappropriate” to comment on the differences.

The RCMP did not answer a long list of questions posed by the Star.

Armstrong, in her letter to the Star, said the RCMP welcomes “actions that result in positive outcomes in the lives of Aboriginal women and girls” and expressed appreciation that the Star conducted an independent investigation that can “further raise awareness among the public as to the reality of this tragedy. We commend your efforts in this endeavor.”

Unless stated otherwise, figures for murdered and missing indigenous women in Gone are for all years.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/12/04/nearly-half-of-murdered-indigenous-women-did-not-know-killers-star-analysis-shows.html>

Guelph faceless doll event honours missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls



A University of Guelph student places a faceless doll with others made during the Faceless Doll Project on Thursday. The project creates greater awareness about missing and murdered aboriginal women.

Waterloo Region Record

By [Tony Saxon](#), Dec 04, 2015

GUELPH — For some it was a show of solidarity and sympathy. To others it was much more personal.

Thursday's Faceless Doll workshop at the University of Guelph drew people for different reasons, but for all it was a way to draw attention to the hundreds and hundreds of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls in Canada.

It was the third time this year the university has held one. A fourth is planned for January.

The U of G workshop is part of the national Faceless Doll Project started by the Native Women's Association of Canada in 2012.

"We've had people come who have been affected personally, where it's happened in their own family," said Maria Shallard, of the school's Office of Intercultural Affairs. "We've had people come who were actually reported as being Jane Does before."

Others, Shallard said, are just there as a show of solidarity.

"It's commemoration, it's to raise awareness and it's to really value these women and honour their sisters and families. To show that they are cared about," she said.

"Often in society women are seen as having no value, especially aboriginal women, which is really unfortunate. This is a way we can value these women."

Students, almost all women, came and created small, faceless felt native women dolls who were then placed on a piece of cloth. That cloth will later be displayed at other vigils.

"It's something to visualize," Shallard said. "It's to demonstrate that these people are not just statistics, they're people that deserve to be commemorated, honoured and valued."

Thursday's Faceless Doll workshop was also one of the activities on the U of G campus associated with the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women in Canada. Officially that day is Sunday, Dec. 6: a national day established by Parliament to remember victims of the 1989 murder of 14 women at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal. It is also a call for action against gender-based violence against women and girls.

A candlelit vigil was held in the University Centre courtyard to mark the occasion, with people laying carnations and battery-operated candles.

On Sunday, Guelph-Wellington Women In Crisis will be holding a vigil at The Boathouse on Gordon Street starting at 6 p.m. It will include a performance by the Woman to Woman Choir.

Lydia Fourcans, of the Guelph Resource Centre for Gender Empowerment and Diversity, said the Faceless Doll workshop is "important because people need to know this is happening and the impact this situation is having on families and society in general."

Fourcans said "it's a way to raise awareness and create change in a compassionate way."

Direct Link: <http://www.therecord.com/news-story/6159048-guelph-faceless-doll-event-honours-missing-and-murdered-aboriginal-women-and-girls/>

No rest, no peace for aboriginal women discarded by killers

The tragically common stories of young women whose bodies were abandoned, left out in the open.



Janet Bruyere, grandmother of Fonessa Bruyere, in her home on the Sagkeeng First Nation, northeast of Winnipeg.

By: [Jennifer Wells](#) Business Columnist, [Tanya Talaga](#) Global Economics Reporter, Rita Daly Special to the Star, Published on Sat Dec 05 2015

Therena Silva. Fonessa Bruyère. Cheryl Duck. Cherisse Houle. Hillary Wilson. Rena Fox. Sandra Johnson. Tyeshia Jones. These are some of the aboriginal women whose bodies were found outside, often in the bush or on the outskirts of cities.

Fonessa Bruyère: A child of 17, her murderer unknown

Just beyond the off-kilter road signage marking the intersection of Ritchie and Mollard, a message of admonition is printed in bold black type: “No dumping of any materials including grass clippings.”



The intersection of Mollard Ave. and Ritchie St, in the northwestern reaches of Winnipeg. A nearby copse of trees in an otherwise wide open stretch of land is where the bodies of Fonessa Bruyere and Therena Silva were dumped.

The area has the desolate aura of a dump site. Winnipeg’s tidy intersection of streets has long given way to dusty roads and hay-baled farmers’ fields beyond the northwestern reaches of the city. The encroaching newer housing developments are at enough of a distance to prevent against prying eyes. There’s not a soul in sight.

August, Prairie hot, 2007. A car, or perhaps a truck, turns from Mollard onto Ritchie toward a small copse of trees. Imagine the crunch of gravel.

A dead girl is summarily disposed of, naked. The family says they were informed of certain facts. That she was raped. That she was stabbed. She was transported and dumped, confirmed, they say, by the absence of blood at the site.

Last seen: in the vicinity of Robin's Donuts, near Selkirk and Aikins. Sex trade worker? Yes. Drugs? T's and R's — Talwin and Ritalin, poor man's heroin.

Her name was Fonessa Bruyère, a child of 17. She once had a Labrador named Bear. She was fond of the colour blue. She climbed into a truck, wearing white sneakers.

Janet Bruyere, grandmother of Fonessa Bruyere.

Sagkeeng First Nation donated a cross. The cross is painted white and lettered in blue, tucked in the shelter of that brace of trees. A faded red medicine bag, once holding sage, tobacco, cedar, is now torn. The bluebird decals faded.

The Prairie grass is almost knee-high, but not high enough to disguise another cross just steps away, this one bare wood with a single, carved name: Therena. Therena Silva's body was found here in December 2002. Dumped. Decomposed. She had been here for months.

Therena's case remains unsolved. Fonessa's case remains unsolved. Cheryl Duck: frozen to death in a field near Ritchie. Unsolved. Cherisse Houle, found in a creek west of here, July 2009. Hillary Wilson, found near the Perimeter Highway east of here, August 2009.

Unsolved. Unsolved.

A constant ribbon of transport trucks can be seen in the distance, a straight arrow shot along the Perimeter. The silence is deafening.

Sandra Johnson: A sister who won't be forgotten



Sandra Johnson's naked body was found on the ice by a man walking his dog in 1992. She was 18 at the time.

On the night Sandra Johnson died, she argued with her sister in the Thunder Bay apartment they shared.

Big sister Sharon tried to persuade Sandra, 18, to stay home. It was cold and late. Sandra had already been to the bar that evening.

Sandra left but she came back, briefly, before walking to their cousin's place.

"I heard her come back in," Sharon Johnson says, "and she gave me her last \$50 from her welfare cheque. She said, 'Here Sharon, hold on to this for me.' And then she went back out. Then I got up. The bathroom window was right by the next building. By the time I looked, she was gone."

Sharon Johnson is the sister of Sandra Johnson.

"My partner at the time, one of the things he said to me was, 'You better stop her and go get her. You'll never forgive yourself if something happens to her,' " Sharon says.

Feb. 13, 1992. Hours after she was last seen, Sandra's naked body was found on the frozen Neebing-McIntyre floodway, near a busy overpass, the low-rise buildings and bungalows nestled around the waters leading into Lake Superior.

She was found by a man out for an early morning stroll with his dog. Sandra's body showed signs of extensive trauma.

This area of Thunder Bay is densely populated. One wonders how no one saw or heard anything. Her case remains unsolved.

"I went through many years of counselling to not blame myself for this," Sharon says.

Johnson has learned to live with her grief. She started the Full Moon Memory Walk in 2005 in memory of her sister and other murdered and missing aboriginal women. Every year, they walk over the Pacific Avenue Bridge and finish near where Sandra's body was found. Once there, the walkers form a circle and hold a drum ceremony. They remember all who have been lost. The walk has become a powerful force of remembrance in Thunder Bay, attracting family members of the lost, local politicians, even police officers.

"There haven't been any new leads, not for a long time ... But I don't want people to forget this happened to her."

Rena Fox: A mother of four, who are looking for answers



The body of Rena Fox was dumped on this gravel road west of Thunder Bay near Kakabeka Falls in 2003. The case remains unsolved.

The stillness of walking along a gravel and dirt road in Kakabeka Falls, one of Ontario's most beautiful waterfalls, is broken by the piercing sound of a gunshot.

Here, in a bush area popular with hunters, is where Rena Fox's body was discovered on Feb. 28, 2003. She was 38.

Tied to the trees on either side of the road are traditional Ojibway ribbons of yellow, red, white and black — symbolizing the four directions and marking where Fox, a mother of four, was found.

The police also left ribbons — theirs are blue.

Bryanne Machimity, one of Rena's four children, has repeatedly called police to find out what happened to her mother, but her calls have gone unanswered.

Bryanne Machimity's mother Rena Fox was believed to be raped and killed outside Thunder Bay Ontario.

"I did try to call the police in (nearby) Thunder Bay. I left messages but I couldn't get a hold of them," says Machimity. She now lives and works in Kenora with her 5-year-old son.

Machimity was 13 when Fox died and at that point, she had lived in foster care for most of her life.

Of her mother, she has two vivid memories. "I think I was 4. She came to pick me up from foster care and she walked me to school."

The next time she remembers seeing her, it was at her mother's funeral. "When she died, I was in a custody facility outside of Fort Frances. I was told she died of natural causes. At the funeral, when I saw her, I could see all these bruises on her face," she says. The makeup didn't cover them.

Machimity has heard a story, second hand, about what may have happened to her mother on the night she died. “She was at a bar. She called a friend to come pick her up. She said that two men were in the bar and bothering her.”

But her friend was late putting her kids to bed and couldn’t get to the bar until later. “By the time she got there, my mom was gone.”

Ontario Provincial Police Sgt. Peter Leon told the Star that Fox’s case is not considered a murder.

“Our investigations into these incidents remain open and will remain open until the OPP can determine the whereabouts of the missing persons and the circumstances surrounding the death of Ms. Fox are confirmed,” Leon said via email.

“Any new information that may come in on an incident that the OPP are investigating will always be investigated no matter how big or small that information may be. Due to the ongoing nature of these investigations, the OPP is not in a position to speak beyond these points at this time as we do not want to compromise the integrity of the investigative work that has taken place up to this date,” he said.

Tyeshia Jones: A loving daughter and aspiring student

The soft drip of a light morning rain is the only sound among the pines where Tyeshia Jones died.

All is quiet now. Nothing in this desolate spot behind the Indian Rd. cemetery in Duncan, B.C., offers a hint of the events that occurred in the early morning hours of Jan. 22, 2011, when the 18-year-old was murdered, strangled with her bra.

Her naked body was found a week after she went missing, following a massive search by police and the community. More than a year would pass before any arrest.

Jones, a Cowichan Tribes member, graduated from high school and was planning her future. She prepared resumés and had her mind set on studying fashion design. She loved to draw, to dance, and adored her three younger siblings.

She also loved her cellphone. Four days before she died, Jones snapped a slew of selfies in the bathroom mirror of the family home. They show a somewhat shy but cheerful girl with braces, innocence on the verge of womanhood. At one point she pulls her mom in for a couple, the last images of the two together.

Mary Jim treasures her daughter’s cellphone now, though she mustered the courage to delete the final texts. Jones left a party and around 3 a.m. had texted a friend she was meeting at the Duncan Superstore to join her halfway. They never met up.

Her phone, found the following day in a planter box, remains one of the few belongings police returned to Jim: the phone, a single earring and four teeth knocked out from their roots, braces still attached.

In an undercover RCMP sting operation, William Elliott, 24, confessed to the Jones murder, as well as the July 2010 killing of Karrie Ann Stone, also of Duncan. Stone, 42, was beaten with a baseball bat and set on fire while still alive.

Elliott, also a Cowichan Tribes member, said he accidentally struck Jones on the road, put her in the back of his pickup truck and drove behind the Indian Rd. cemetery where he attempted to sexually assault her. He strangled her, then beat her head, teeth and eyes with a stick to try to conceal her identity. He later burned her clothes.

Jim confronted her daughter's killer before he was convicted and sentenced to life without parole for 20 years. "I told him I forgave him that day because I didn't want to be bitter," she says, wiping away tears. "But I don't think William knows what he's taken from me.

"I wanted so much more with her."

How they died

An RCMP analysis of murders of aboriginal vs. non-aboriginal women and girls found that the bodies of aboriginal victims are more likely to be left outside, in the open. Where the method of killing is known, Star research shows stabbing is the most common, followed by shooting. But when all forms of manual means of death (beating, strangulation, blunt force, and other manual trauma) are lumped together, it is clear that the prime means of killing aboriginal women involves being up close, and it is physically intense and brutal in nature.

Method (top 5):

Stabbed — 129

Shot — 83

Strangled/asphyxiated — 74

Beaten — 71

Blunt force trauma — 44

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/12/05/no-rest-no-peace-for-aboriginal-women-discarded-by-killers.html>

Memorials, candlelight vigil in Saskatoon to honour victims of violence

Dec. 6 is a national day of action on violence against women

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 06, 2015 4:20 PM CT Last Updated: Dec 06, 2015 4:20 PM CT



A memorial at Place Riel honours the 14 victims who were killed at the École Polytechnique in Montreal in 1989. Today is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. (Anouk Lebel/CBC)

The National Day Action on Violence Against Women was marked in Saskatoon on Sunday.

A special display was set up at Place Riel on the University of Saskatchewan campus. It showed photos of the 14 victims of the École Polytechnique massacre, as well as a pair of shoes beside each photo. All around the table were other pairs of shoes.

A sign near the display said the shoes, "represent the women's lives who have been lost to violence as well as the steps left to be taken toward ending gender-based violence in our community."

"We want to remind our community that gender-based violence and intimate partner-based violence are still big issues, especially in our community," Stephanie Locke, board member of Saskatoon Women's Community Coalition said.

She said the coalition was inspired to do the display by the École Polytechnique massacre in Montreal. On Dec. 6, 1989, 14 women were killed by a gunman.

"He did not believe that women had a place at university, making a way for themselves, and this kind of violence still happens whether it's massacres against women or it's violence in their home or violence on the street targeted at women," Locke said.

The Ministry of Social Services also has a window display at its building in Saskatoon.

A candlelight vigil will take place on Sunday at 6 p.m. CST at the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) office at 511 First Ave. N.

Nancy Johnson, the women's representative for the Prairie region for PSAC said they do not name the gunman at the event.

"We want his name to die. We'd like to have the names of the victims stated and who they are and what their dreams and aspirations were after they were to graduate and the reason we do this is because we want their names to live and keep their memory alive."

Johnson said there are close ties to this event to the issue of violence facing aboriginal women.

"Missing and murdered aboriginal women have been happening for years, not just for the last 26 years and there is obviously a significant tie to it of how men disrespect aboriginal women."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/memorials-candlelight-vigil-in-saskatoon-to-honour-victims-of-violence-1.3353192>

Missing and murdered indigenous women inquiry details coming Tuesday

First of two phases of a national inquiry will be announced on Tuesday

By Susana Mas, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 07, 2015 3:03 PM ET Last Updated: Dec 07, 2015 10:37 PM ET



Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett will make the announcement about a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women in Ottawa on Tuesday. (Sean Kilpatrick/Canadian Press)

The federal government will announce on Tuesday some of the details of a much-anticipated national public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

The announcement comes as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is preparing to address a special assembly of chiefs organized by the Assembly of First Nations in Gatineau Tuesday morning in an effort to re-set the relationship with Canada's indigenous people.

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett will make the announcement on Tuesday at 12:30 p.m. in Ottawa following the prime minister's address.

She will be in the foyer of the House of Commons flanked by Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould and Minister of Status of Women Patricia Hajdu.



Status of Women Minister Patricia Hajdu said on Monday, Dec. 7, 2015 the launch of a national public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women will come in two phases. (CBC)

"We are very excited to move forward on this file," said Hajdu during question period as the 42nd Parliament resumed today.

"Murdered and missing indigenous women is a national tragedy that not only affects women but their families and their communities. And so we intend to move incredibly quickly and with a great deal of respect."

2-phase approach

The government will provide details about the first phase of the inquiry on Tuesday, which will include consultation with the victims' families, aboriginal organizations, experts and other national stakeholders to lay the groundwork for the launch of an inquiry in 2016.

"We really do see a two-phase approach where we do set some parameters about what this inquiry will look like, and then we move forward into the actual inquiry itself," said Hajdu on Monday.

Trudeau's Liberals promised during the recent election campaign to "immediately" launch an inquiry, at a cost of \$40 million over two years.

Bennett will seek the input of regional chiefs and their respective delegations when she meets with them Monday afternoon ahead of the special assembly of chiefs.

The Trudeau government's promise to reset the relationship with Canada's indigenous people featured prominently in Friday's speech from the throne.

The government's ambitious agenda also includes improving education for First Nations and implementing all of the 94 recommendations stemming from a report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

As Parliament resumed on Monday, Bennet reiterated her government's commitment to seeing all of the recommendations through amid growing skepticism and questions about how much such a promise would cost taxpayers.

"It was inappropriate for us to cherry pick out of the 94 recommendations and with political will, leadership and partnership, nation to nation we're going to get this done," said Bennett during question period on Monday.

She gave a nod to the provinces and territories for beginning to implement some of the key recommendations included in the report, but made no mention of costs.

The government said it will also introduce legislation to provide more support for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Interim Conservative leader Rona Ambrose said she supports the inquiry — a stark contrast from her predecessor, who frequently rebuffed demands for further study.

"It's something that I think we should do," Ambrose said. "I believe very strongly that anything that we can do as a Parliament to support what is a very tragic situation among aboriginal women in this country."

NDP Leader Tom Mulcair, who wanted to launch an inquiry within 100 days if his party formed government, said he is awaiting details on specifics.

"Getting it done right, taking time to define the mandate, nobody is going to quibble with that," Mulcair said.

"Are they announcing a full national inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women? If the answer is yes, they will have our full support."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/missing-murdered-women-inquiry-1.3354369>

Pain is 'never-ending' for children of missing and murdered indigenous women

There are no statistics on how many of Canada's 1,200 missing and murdered aboriginal women were mothers. But depression and suicide can stalk those they leave behind.



Sheena Joseph sits outside her home on Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, where she was raised by her grandparents. It was there, in 2004, that she learned her mother had been fatally stabbed. A year and a half later, her grief-stricken brother hanged himself.

By: [Joanna Smith](#) Ottawa Bureau reporter, Published on Mon Dec 07 2015

OHSWEKEN, ONT.—Sheena Joseph remembers a vivid dream that brought her to a beach on a beautiful, sunny day, with the brightest colours she could ever imagine.

Her mother, Shelley Lynne Joseph, was there too, six months after she had died.

“She kind of just shook her head and it was like we both said, ‘You know, it’s OK, for everything,’” Sheena, a 31-year-old Mohawk woman, recalls one summer afternoon beneath the weeping willow outside her home. She was raised there by her maternal grandparents, on Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, a reserve about 20 kilometres southeast of Brantford, Ont.

They embraced. Sheena woke up. She found some peace.

Not only with the violent death of her mother, but also with the truth that she had never been close to her, and that her mother’s sudden absence, although tragic, had not hit her the way it had other family members.

“She gave me the best life she could have, under her circumstances,” says Sheena, who was an infant when she and her 3-year-old brother Ivan went to live with their grandparents, Aileen and Jim Joseph.

“That dream, with her situation, helped me get through it. Even though she wasn’t here, she came to me and we both said, ‘We’re fine, we’re OK.’”

It stopped there, for a while, her grief.

Then, like those waves on that beach, it began to ripple, until her grandfather found Ivan in the shed, and her grief nearly killed her, too.



Sheena Joseph with her daughter, Alexa, and her grandmother, Aileen. Sheena says she struggles to find a balance between empowering her daughter and being protective of her.

There are no statistics telling how many of the more than 1,200 missing and murdered First Nations, Métis and Inuit women in Canada were mothers, and so no way to know how many children they left behind.

News reports offer glimpses of these women, often referred to as a “mother of” nameless children whose stories usually go untold, or unfinished.

“When a woman goes missing, there is always somebody that they leave behind,” said Denise Stonefish, deputy grand chief of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, at a benefit concert at Six Nations in July.

“They leave the children behind, and then, what happens to those children?”

It was July 2, 2004, when a police cruiser turned off the country road and into the driveway in the shadow of the weeping willow.

Sheena Joseph’s younger brother, who along with a younger sister had spent most of his life living with their mother, bolted from the car.

“He was all frantic and he was saying, ‘He killed her! He killed her! Mom’s dead,’” Sheena recalls.

Shelley Lynne Joseph, 40, had been stabbed in the heart shortly after 3 that morning during an argument with Don Balan, her landlord and a man with whom, the court heard, she had also been intimate, according to a Hamilton Spectator report about the sentencing hearing in March 2006 — although her mother, Aileen, disputes to what extent.

Balan pleaded guilty to manslaughter and was sentenced to nine years, which was reduced to five years and eight months due to time served.

Aileen Joseph says Canada Day would have been the birthday of Shelley’s older brother Jimmy, who died in 1973, and Shelley was having a hard time, drinking too much again.

“She called me and we talked for about two hours on the phone. She told me a lot of things about her life, about (Balan), about her kids and a whole bunch of other things,” says Aileen, who tells her daughter’s story despite the pain it causes her because she hopes it will encourage women in abusive or dangerous situations to get help.

During their last telephone conversation, Aileen says, Shelley talked about turning her life around.



A wall in the living room of Aileen Joseph's home is dedicated to the memory of her daughter, Shelley Lynne Joseph, and her grandson Ivan.

“She said that night, ‘Mom, I’m going to surprise you one of these days and come home.’

“I didn’t expect her to come home in a coffin.”

The day they got the news, Sheena sat on the floor holding her sister — who had been preparing to celebrate her 16th birthday — and watching her toddler son taking it all in from the couch.

She remembers Ivan, 22 at the time, running out of the house and into his truck to drive to Hamilton, arriving at the apartment while police were still there.

Ivan had always had a much stronger attachment to his mother than Sheena, and soon his vengeful rage gave way to deep sadness.

“His grandfather would lie on the bed and he would hug him until he was asleep,” says Aileen, choking on the memory.

This happened every night for a month. Eventually, the angry, haunted look in his eyes faded, and his family insists, even in hindsight, there were no warning signs of the tragedy to come as Ivan devoted himself to his job as an ironworker, like his grandfather and great-grandfather before him.

“Things were good for a while,” says Aileen.

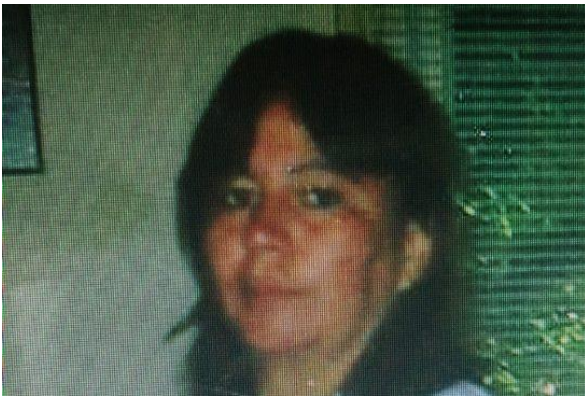
Then Ivan, who had been living in Hamilton, moved back to his grandparents’ home on Six Nations, which is where he was when Sheena returned for a visit from Ohio, on Nov. 19, 2005, the night before her 22nd birthday.

Sheena and Ivan, whom the family often called Jiminy, hung out like the best friends they were, listening to music and catching up before heading out to play pool in Brantford. They returned home around 1:30 a.m. after deciding to delay a spontaneous birthday trip to Niagara Falls.

As she fell asleep she could hear her brother listening to music in his bedroom.

Later that morning, as she was getting ready to pick up a birthday cake, she heard a loud noise and ran from her bedroom to find her grandparents frozen, silent and staring at her.

“Call 911. Jiminy’s dead,” her grandfather said after what felt like forever.



Shelley Lynne Joseph wanted to turn her life around, but at the age of 40 she was fatally stabbed in the heart during an argument with her landlord.

“I just remember I was running through the hallways screaming and crying, ‘It’s not him! It’s not him! It’s not my brother,’” she says.

He had hanged himself in the shed.

This time, there would be no dream about a hug on a beach.

“The pain of losing him to suicide was so intense, it was all I could think about,” says Sheena. “I guess I felt almost the way he did over losing our mother.”

Three years ago, Sheena confessed to Aileen just how close she came to losing her, too, about a month after Ivan died.

“I remember wanting — not necessarily wanting to kill myself, but wanting to be with him so bad and thinking at the time that if I did something that hurt myself enough, then maybe I would see a vision of him or he would come back,” says Sheena. “My thinking was messed up during that time.

“I think I had taken Advil or Tylenol or both. I know nothing about any harder drugs or anything, but I figured if you took enough of those, you could die. I didn’t know what I was thinking, to be honest, but I took them.”

She lay down on her bed and remembers feeling as if she were watching herself from above, and then pushing herself up from the bed, calling out, after she thought she saw her son run through the hallway.

She thinks she emerged from her stupor about a day and a half later.

“It’s never-ending,” Sheena says. “You just find ways to deal with it, I guess.”



Ivan Joseph, distraught over the killing of his mother, hanged himself in 2005 in a shed outside his grandparents' house.

And while the death of her mother did not hurt as deeply, she is aware of how it has affected her life.

“I am afraid of men,” says Sheena, who lives with her grandparents and her two children in the house she grew up in. “I have had relationships, but there is still that part where

you can't fully open up and get close, because if it happened to her, and I'm from her, it's going to happen to me.

"I think the hardest part of being a survivor of one of the murdered victims, being a survivor of someone who committed suicide and being a survivor of trying to do it yourself, is having kids and trying to raise them to know there are all these organizations there, that you're there to talk to them, to be a role model."

Her son has struggled with stress and anxiety from the chaos he witnessed the day they learned Shelley had been killed, and for a while he would run back and forth from the window to the kitchen, screaming and crying, saying "Quiet, hide!" whenever a strange car pulled into the driveway.

"I don't know how to sway him from thinking the world is scary, but at the same time, I am glad he knows the world is scary," she says.

She also struggles to find a balance between empowering and being protective of her daughter, who at 6 has a boldness that makes her mother both proud and anxious.

"The world is so beautiful," she says. "People just make stupid choices."

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/12/07/pain-is-never-ending-for-children-of-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women.html>

Aboriginal women inquiry coming 'very shortly,' minister tells vigil

[Robert Sibley, Ottawa Citizen](#)

Published on: December 7, 2015 | Last Updated: December 7, 2015 11:42 AM EST

The Liberal government will "very shortly" announce a national inquiry into Canada's missing and murdered indigenous women, Status of Women minister Patty Hadju said Sunday.

Speaking to a crowd of 400 gathered Sunday evening at the Women's Monument in Minto Park to mark the 26th anniversary of the murder of 14 women at the École Polytechnique in Montreal, Hadju won applause for saying Canadians can expect in "the weeks to come" to hear about the scope of an inquiry

She emphasized that the government wants "work with people," particularly aboriginal women, in both setting up the inquiry and its ongoing process.

The day after his election on Oct. 19, Liberal leader Justin Trudeau said his government would move “quickly” on a campaign promise to hold a public inquiry into the disproportionate rate of violence perpetuated against indigenous women in Canada.



Naomi Tremblay, 7, was among the dozens who attended the candlelight vigil marking the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre at the Women’s Monument in Minto Park on Sunday, Dec. 6, 2015. David Kawai / Ottawa Citizen

A 2014 RCMP report found that 1,181 indigenous women were killed or disappeared between 1980 and 2012. Statistically, aboriginal women are eight times more likely to be the victims of violence than non-aboriginal women.

The promise of the inquiry might have been the highlight of the vigil, but the issue of violence against any woman was far from forgotten. A video screen displayed messages such as, “Don’t tell your daughter not to go out; tell your son to behave.”

“Why are women still struggling everyday to overcome systemic violence?” asked Rosella Chibambo of the Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women, reminding the crowd of the purpose of the vigil.

She said women’s groups will be “activity monitoring the new government” to see if it delivers on promises to tackle the social ill of gender-based and sexual violence against women. “Because it’s 2015. We are watching you.”

Canadians are increasingly aware of the issue, said Yamikani Msosa, public education co-ordinator for the Sexual Assault Support Centre in Ottawa.



Dozens attended the candlelight vigil marking the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre at the Women's Monument in Minto Park on Sunday, Dec. 6, 2015. David Kawai / Ottawa Citizen

"On this day, nationally, wherever you go in Canada, the conversation is about ending gender-based violence," she said, observing that organizations such as hers are getting more invitations to speak in schools and even government offices about how to end violence against women.

Nevertheless, that violence continues unabated, she said, pointing to the killings in September of three women in the Wilno area.

"On the ground, the realities (of violence against women) are still very much prevalent. Our waiting lists (at women's shelters and sexual assault centres) are closed because we don't have the capacity," Msosa said. "There's been a surge of survivors coming forward saying they need support."

Msosa also noted a "forgotten dimension" of the problem of violence against women as it relates to immigrants and refugees. In some cases, she explained, immigrant or refugee women find themselves subject to violence after they arrive in this country. Some remain in a violent domestic situation out of fear that attempting to escape will affect their immigrant or refugee status.

"Women might not experience this in their home countries, but they do when they come to Canada," Msosa said. "Statistically speaking we know that the rates of violence within families go up because of the pressures of immigration.

"This is a dimension (of refugee and immigrant policy) that is forgotten," Msosa said. "We need more support for immigrant and refugee women who are fleeing violence."

Direct Link: <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/aboriginal-women-inquiry-coming-very-shortly-minister-says>

National Inuit org “encouraged” by launch of MMIW inquiry

“Inuit-specific causes and Inuit-driven solutions”

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, December 08, 2015 - 2:30 pm



ITK President Natan Obed said "considerations with respect to murdered and missing Inuit women and girls are unique" and that ITK is ready to "tackle the Inuit-specific causes and find Inuit-driven solutions to strengthen our communities." (FILE PHOTO)

(Updated 3:55 p.m., Dec. 8)

Canada’s national Inuit organization is “encouraged” by the Dec. 8 launch of a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women, Natan Obed, the president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, said in a written statement.

Three Liberal cabinet ministers — Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett, Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, and Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu — declared the launch of the first phase of the inquiry at a press conference in Ottawa.

That first phase involves what they call an “engagement process” — a series of regional consultation meetings with survivors, family members of victims, Aboriginal leaders and representatives of territorial and provincial governments.

The Liberal politicians said they will design the inquiry only after that work is done.

That means they’re providing no detailed information yet on how the inquiry will work.

“The views and ideas expressed by all participants will allow the government to develop the inquiry, including the mandate, the terms of reference, the format of the inquiry, and the timeline,” a federal government statement said.

Their Dec. 8 announcement fulfills a Liberal election promise and carries out one of the 94 recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Obed, who is in Paris attending the COP21 global climate change conference, said Inuit “are ready to do our part.”

But he also said the issue of murdered and missing Inuit women and girls is “unique.”

“We are ready to work with all organizations that represent Inuit to tackle the Inuit-specific causes and find Inuit-driven solutions to strengthen our communities,” Obed said in his statement.

Pauktuutit, the national Inuit women’s association, said in an earlier statement, on Dec. 4, that they have already begun talking to Bennett and her officials about “the need to ensure the full and equitable participation of Inuit women at all stages of a national inquiry.”

“We have recommended to the minister that a pre-consultation meeting be held specifically with Inuit families and others from across Inuit Nunangat, including Inuit in urban areas, at the first opportunity, and I hope that she and her cabinet colleagues will support our approach,” Pauktuutit president Rebecca Kudloo said.

Pauktuutit also said that Bennett will meet with Inuit family members in Ottawa on Dec. 11, and that Pauktuutit is working with Tungasuvvingat Inuit to reach out to families in Ottawa who may want to participate.

“Pauktuutit requires more information about the mandate, scope and timeline of this inquiry and continues to call for the immediate development of a national action plan to address Inuit-specific priorities,” the organization said.

The three Liberal ministers said they will start their main regional meetings in the New Year.

And the federal government will soon post an online discussion guide and online survey to help focus those meetings.

“This includes questions about who should conduct the inquiry, the length of the inquiry, who should be heard, and what issues should be considered,” the federal government said.

The Native Women’s Association of Canada, through its Sisters in Spirit project, began gathering statistics on the issue more than five years ago.

In 2010, NWAC published a report that identified 582 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls across Canada. In 2014, the RCMP identified 1,181 missing and murdered Indigenous women.

The national [MMIW inquiry website is available here.](#)

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiagonline.ca/stories/article/65674national_inuit_org_encouraged_by_launch_of_mmiw_inquiry/

Missing and murdered indigenous women: 1st phase of public inquiry outlined today

Ministers to spend next 2 months consulting with families of missing, murdered indigenous women

By Susana Mas, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 08, 2015 12:12 PM ET Last Updated: Dec 08, 2015 4:45 PM ET



Ministers will meet with the families of missing and murdered indigenous women in Ottawa this week, as the federal government launches the first of two phases in the creation of a much-awaited national public inquiry.

"I am pleased to announce that the government of Canada is launching its first phase of the inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women and girls," Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould said at a news conference Tuesday on Parliament Hill.

"As a first step, we will meet with the families in the National Capital Region with the goal of hearing their views on the design of the inquiry and what it needs to achieve. And over the next two months, we will hear from more families, other indigenous peoples, national aboriginal organizations and a range of front-line services workers and others."



Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould lays out the first steps of her Liberal government's commitment to hold an inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women. (CBC News)

Wilson-Raybould, who is the first indigenous person to serve as a justice minister, worked as a regional chief for the Assembly of First Nations prior to being elected to Parliament.

She said that early calls for an inquiry had been met "by silence," but that victims' families "deserve better."

"Doing better requires openness and the ability to listen. We have heard this loudly and clearly, and we have heard that this cannot be just another report," Wilson-Raybould said.

The Harper government had rebuffed growing calls for a national inquiry, saying the government action on crime precluded the need for further studies.

AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde welcomed the announcement, which he said "has been a long time coming."

"After years of denial and deflection, it is my hope we can make real strides in achieving justice for families and achieving safety and security for all our people," Bellegarde said in a written statement.

Phase 2 coming in the spring



Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett, flanked by Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu, left, and Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, said the consultation phase will continue as long as needed "to get it right." (CBC News)

Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett said today's announcement will set a new tone for "a collaborative, inclusive" process.

Bennett said the first phase of the inquiry would determine its objectives, focus and parameters.

"It will also help identify potential terms of reference for the inquiry, outline possible activities and participants, and potentially help identify the commissioners."

Bennett said the first phase will take as long as needed "to get it right."

"Phase 2 will be the actual inquiry itself, and we hope to be able to announce that next year, in the spring," Bennett said.

Interim Conservative Party Leader Rona Ambrose kept her remarks brief, telling reporters on Tuesday afternoon that the Liberals were "off to a great start."



NDP Leader Tom Mulcair gave the government a nod for moving ahead with a process to launch an inquiry, but expressed concern over the lack of a fixed launch date.

"Given the urgency of this national crisis," said Mulcair during question period, "can we expect a report by the end of 2016?"

Trudeau did not answer the question directly, saying only that the government was committed to doing "this right."

The Liberal Party platform pegged the cost of a full national public inquiry at \$40 million over two years starting in 2016.

'The victims deserve justice, their families an opportunity to be heard and to heal.' –
Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

Speaking to [a group of First Nations leaders](#) earlier in the day, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said the launch of an inquiry was "a priority" for his government.

"The victims deserve justice, their families an opportunity to be heard and to heal. We must work together to put an end to this ongoing tragedy."

The RCMP found in 2014 nearly 1,200 documented cases of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls between 1980 and 2012, a number the Mounties said exceeded previous public estimates.

A 2015 United Nations report found that young First Nations, Métis and Inuit women were five times more likely to die under violent circumstances than their non-aboriginal counterparts.

MMIW: CBC investigation



CBC News will tweet the name and stories of over 250 missing and murdered indigenous women profiled in our online database after today's announcement.

Follow [@CBCNews](#) on Twitter or by searching #MMIW. Access our database and read more at [CBCNews.ca Aboriginal](#).

CBC News continues to investigate missing and murdered indigenous women and girls by exploring the stories of these women, their families and their communities.

If you know anything about any unsolved MMIW case, email us at MMIW@cbc.ca.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/missing-murdered-inquiry-1.3355492>

Liberals to unveil consultation process for inquiry into indigenous women

[Gloria Galloway](#) AND [Kathryn Blaze Baum](#)

OTTAWA and TORONTO — The Globe and Mail

Published Monday, Dec. 07, 2015 3:44PM EST

Last updated Monday, Dec. 07, 2015 9:03PM EST

The Liberal government will outline Tuesday the consultation process that will be critical in shaping a national inquiry into Canada's missing and murdered indigenous women – a first step that one federal minister said will create “momentum for action.”

As part of the consultations, some relatives of missing or murdered aboriginal women are slated to have a closed-door meeting Friday with Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett and possibly other ministers at a downtown Ottawa hotel, a victim's family member told The Globe.

The ministers of indigenous affairs, justice and status of women will make a joint announcement in Ottawa on Tuesday, just hours after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau addresses an annual gathering of chiefs organized by the Assembly of First Nations in nearby Gatineau.

The consultations will help determine the scope and duration of the inquiry, as well as who is best suited to lead it.

“We're at the very beginning stages and we have no preconceived ideas about what this is going to look like,” Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu told reporters Monday. “We just really want to make sure that we honour the families and the communities.”

The Liberals, who have committed to launching a probe by the summer, have said from the outset that “pre-inquiry engagement” with family members and other stakeholders is necessary to ensure the inquiry process and its findings are relevant to those who have been most affected by the tragedies.

Ms. Hajdu said the government envisions a two-phase approach in which it first sets parameters for the inquiry and then moves forward with the inquiry itself. “It's [about] making sure that everybody has a chance to shape this ... as it will actually set forward some momentum for action,” she said. The Liberals campaigned on a pledge to spend \$40-million over two years on a federal probe.

Before the announcement Tuesday, Mr. Trudeau will speak to the chiefs at the AFN meeting, a signal of his commitment to forging a new nation-to-nation relationship with

Canada's indigenous people. His predecessor, former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper, did not meet with all of the First Nations chiefs in one room in the nearly 10 years he was in office.

The chiefs in Gatineau will also discuss what can and should be done to halt the violence that has claimed so many lives.

Indigenous leaders have long urged Ottawa to launch a national inquiry, with calls growing louder in the wake of a 2014 RCMP report that found 1,181 indigenous women were killed or disappeared between 1980 and 2012. The former Conservative government held the position that these tragedies are not part of a wider sociological phenomenon, but rather crimes best handled by police.

Members of the Harper government also argued that the problem is largely a matter of domestic violence. But a recent Globe investigation highlighted that this is not the whole story. It found that indigenous women are roughly seven times more likely than other Canadian women to die at the hands of a serial killer. Dr. Bennett said in an interview that the finding underscored the need for specific action to protect indigenous women from "sick and dangerous" people who have found novel ways to seek out their victims.

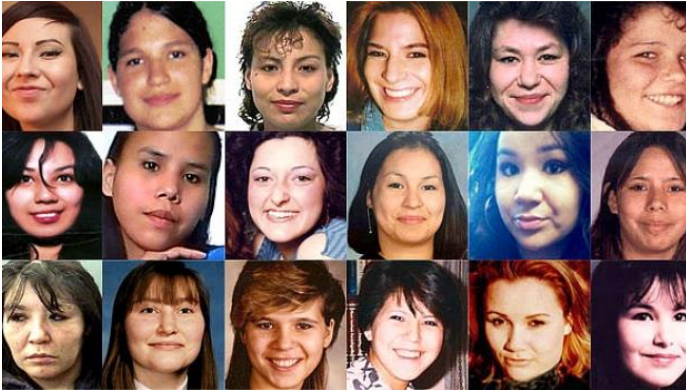
Now that Mr. Harper is no longer prime minister and Alberta MP Rona Ambrose is leading the Conservative party in its role of Official Opposition, the Tories say they will support the inquiry. "It's something that I think we should do," Ms. Ambrose told reporters Monday after the first Question Period of the new Parliament. "What I have said to the government, though, is please do not take years and years because we need to act."

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/minister-to-address-missing-murdered-aboriginal-women-inquiry-tuesday/article27634556/>

22 cases added to CBC's missing and murdered indigenous women database

CBC News continues to investigate the unsolved cases of missing and murdered indigenous women

By Connie Walker, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 08, 2015 12:15 PM ET Last Updated: Dec 08, 2015 12:33 PM ET



For the past year, CBC News has been investigating unsolved cases of missing and murdered indigenous women and has uncovered over 250 spanning several decades. (CBC)



CBC's investigation into unsolved cases of missing and murdered indigenous women has learned of 22 more deaths and disappearances across Canada, including seven that occurred this year.

CBC News will tweet the names and cases of the more than 250 missing women and girls in its investigation over the next 24 hours, to mark the announcement today of the much-anticipated national inquiry by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett.

For the past year, CBC News has been investigating these unsolved cases, some of which back as far as 1951.

For example, for years Barb Desjarlais believed her missing mother Audrey was the Jane Doe found in the Red River in Winnipeg in 2012.

A CBC News investigation prompted Winnipeg Police to conduct DNA testing and, in June, the remains were positively identified. Police say there is now an "open investigation" into the [death of Audrey Desjarlais](#), 52.



Krystal Andrews, a 23-year-old mother of two from Manitoba's God's Lake First Nation in Manitoba, was killed last month, and RCMP are calling her death suspicious.

In another new addition, [Krystal Andrews](#), a 23-year-old mother of two from Manitoba's God's Lake First Nation was killed last month, and RCMP are calling her death suspicious.

She is the second woman to be killed in the remote community in the past three years — 15-year-old Leah Anderson was murdered in 2013. Her case also remains unsolved.

More than 110 families have been interviewed by CBC News about the cases so far. About 70 per cent of family members expressed the desire for a national inquiry into the issue.

Dawn Harvard is president of the Native Women's Association of Canada. She says families of missing and murdered indigenous women have high expectations of a national inquiry.

"I know a lot of the families have an expectation that this inquiry will help with some of those unsolved cases that are ongoing."

Harvard says families also hope an inquiry will result in direct action to prevent further cases.

"It's not only about addressing outstanding cases ... it's also about taking action, having a commitment from those leaders once they hear to make a difference, to change the situation, to address the root causes so that it doesn't happen to someone else's family."

CBC News continues its investigation into missing and murdered indigenous women. Anyone with information about these cases, as well as family members who have not been interviewed, please email us at MMIW@cbc.ca.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/22-cases-added-to-cbc-s-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-database-1.3355012>

Manitobans react to phase one of MMIW national inquiry

By [Lauren McNabb](#) Senior Reporter/Anchor Global News, December 8, 2015 2:02 pm

Federal Justice minister outlines the scope of the national inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women



WINNIPEG — The federal government says it will take the next few months to consult with families on how an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women should look.

Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould said indigenous women are three times more likely to experience violent crime.

“The extent of violence against indigenous girls is not an indigenous problem. It is not simply a women’s issue. It’s a national tragedy,” Wilson Raybould said.

The Liberal government is calling this first phase the ‘design’ that will shape the inquiry. \$40 million will be directed towards the process over the next two years.

Bernice Catcheway’s daughter has been missing since 2008. The Portage La Prairie, Manitoba mom believes an inquiry will help some heal, while perhaps prevent similar tragedies for others.

“Not everyone agrees with it, I know,” Catcheway said. “But it’s good because families need answers.”

Ottawa is promising the inquiry to be an ‘inclusive’ process that will develop ‘concrete’ answers and recommendations.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett acknowledged both racism and sexism are a huge part of the problem.

“We need to hear those stories so Canadians understand racism and sexism in this country kills,” Bennett said.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2387917/ottawa-announces-first-phase-of-inquiry-into-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women/>

Northerners react to action plan on missing and murdered indigenous women

‘It’s starting the right way, it’s talking to us first,’ says Sandra Lockhart

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 09, 2015 5:00 AM CT Last Updated: Dec 09, 2015 9:02 AM CT



'It's starting the right way, it's talking to us first,' says Sandra Lockhart, a Yellowknife indigenous women's advocate. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

Indigenous leaders in the North say they are pleased the government is finally launching its first phase of the inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women and girls by meeting and consulting with their families.

Ministers will be meeting with the families of missing and murdered indigenous women in Ottawa this week, as the federal government launches the first of two phases in the creation of a national public inquiry.

"This has been a long ongoing issue in the Yukon," said Krista Reid, president of the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle.

"Every community has been affected by a loss of an aboriginal family member here in the Yukon territory," she added.

Reid said she is glad that the federal government is now taking steps to educate Canadians on this issue.

"It's not just a First Nations issue and it's not just a First Nations women's issue," she said.

"It's everybody's issue because it is happening in our backyards, it's happening next door."

Families should drive the process

Reid said the families should be the ones driving the process in the inquiry.

"They're the experts," said Reid. "We can't even pretend to know what they've gone through, and all we can do is hold their hand and walk beside them and hope to just make it that much easier for them."

Sandra Lockhart, an indigenous women's advocate in Yellowknife, said an inquiry into this long-standing issues "has never been done by us and through us."

"It's starting the right way, it's talking to us first," she said.

With the inquiry underway, Lockhart said what needs to be done next is to address the process at the community level.

"I think there's a grieving process coming," she said, adding that there will likely be a ripple effect from the inquiry that may open old wounds.

Investigating the missing and murdered indigenous women is only the first step for Lockhart.

"In time we need to start to look at what's happening with missing and murdered men," she said.

Lockhart said she would like the inquiry to help address systemic issues such as the problems with Canada's foster care system, criminal justice system and health care system.

"The vision is big, but I think more than anything I want to see us walk in dignity," she said.



Rebecca Kudloo, president of the Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, says organizations that lobby for Inuit women 'will be vocal and we will be fully participating' in a Canadian inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

Transparent and fulsome process

Rebecca Kudloo, president of Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, said Inuit will be represented at the table, and she has already been in talks with federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett about the inquiry.

"I know, looking at the news, it seems like it's mainly for First Nations. But I can assure you that as Inuit and the organizations that lobby for Inuit women, we will be vocal and we will be fully participating in this."

Kudloo also stressed there's a need for support services during this process.

"We feel that not enough counselling for both women and men is available, and this will keep happening until we can provide services for the people," she said.

"We are encouraged to see the government announce an open, transparent and fulsome process that will lead to a national inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women which involves engagement with victims' families as well as Inuit, First Nations and Metis representative organizations," said Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami in a statement.

"We are ready to work with all organizations that represent Inuit to tackle the Inuit-specific causes and find Inuit-driven solutions to strengthen our communities," added Obed.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/north-mm-w-inquiry-reaction-1.3356349>

Indigenous leaders, families laud launch of national inquiry

[Kathryn Blaze Baum](#) And [Gloria Galloway](#)

Toronto and Gatineau, Que. — The Globe and Mail

Published Tuesday, Dec. 08, 2015 9:59AM EST

Last updated Wednesday, Dec. 09, 2015 8:10AM EST

After decades of advocacy, victims' families and indigenous leaders are rejoicing at the launch of the first phase of a national inquiry into Canada's missing and murdered aboriginal women – a probe the Liberal government promises will be shaped by input from those who have been most affected by the tragedies.

'It's time for justice': Liberals launch inquiry into missing, murdered Indigenous women (CP Video)

Clutching eagle feathers on Parliament Hill Tuesday, three federal ministers outlined the two-month consultation process that will help determine the scope and duration of the inquiry, as well as who will lead it. The consultations will begin later this week, when the ministers of justice, indigenous affairs and status of women hold closed-door meetings with victims' families from the Ottawa area.

"We will listen clearly to their voices," Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould told reporters, just hours after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau assured a gathering of hundreds of First Nations chiefs that no relationship is more important to him than the one with Canada's indigenous people.

"No inquiry, as we know, can undo what has happened, nor can it restore what we have lost. But it can help us find ways forward, because we know, as a country, that we can and must do better."

Asked about whether the government would consider reforming or repealing the Indian Act in its efforts to address the systemic factors that render indigenous women disproportionately more vulnerable to violence, Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett said "absolutely," and Ms. Wilson-Raybould added it "could be the subject of discussion."

The government will hear directly from victims' relatives across the country, as well as from national aboriginal organizations, front-line social workers and provincial and territorial representatives as it formulates a plan for the inquiry, which is slated to begin in the spring.

Calls for a national inquiry date back at least to 1993, when indigenous groups and a Thunder Bay police commissioner espoused the need for a federal probe into the unsolved killings of aboriginal women. The Globe and Mail reported at the time that an indigenous group had collected 3,000 petition signatures.

Tuesday's announcement marked the first step toward an inquiry that proponents hope will culminate in concrete action. It comes more than a year after the RCMP released a report that found that 1,181 aboriginal women were killed or went missing between 1980 and 2012. The launch of the consultation process was lauded by victims' families, indigenous organizations and the governments of Alberta and Manitoba, where roughly half of all female homicide victims are indigenous, according to the RCMP report.

"We can't do this alone any more," Bernadette Smith, whose sister Claudette Osborne has been missing since 2008, told reporters as she fought to control her emotions. "We need Canada to help. Our women are loved. They're not just someone who is disposable. We miss them every day."

Ms. Smith flew in from Winnipeg so she could learn first-hand about what is being planned. Last year, after Tina Fontaine's body was pulled from the city's Red River and her death was deemed a homicide, community members began to drag the river in the hope of finding clues into unsolved deaths and disappearances. She praised the government's commitment to putting families at the centre of the process, saying, "we're the experts, unfortunately."

Dawn Lavell-Harvard, the president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, expressed hope the inquiry will "open our eyes" so that powerful decision-makers have the "right information" to tackle the issue. "This is the important first step," she said. "And I think what's important is we're taking that step together."

The Liberals campaigned on a pledge to "immediately" launch an inquiry at a cost of \$40-million over two years, but Dr. Bennett said the figure and timeline were placeholders. She said the budget and duration of the inquiry will become clearer once Canadians weigh in, including via an online survey posted to a government website in the coming weeks.

"Our aim is to hear from as many people as possible," Dr. Bennett said, adding that she, Ms. Wilson-Raybould and Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu will "deliberate" on the information gleaned, including as it relates to who will lead the inquiry.

The former Conservative government dismissed calls for a federal probe, with some members narrowing the discussion to domestic violence. But a [recent Globe investigation](#) highlighted that family violence is not the whole story. It found that indigenous women are roughly seven times more likely than other Canadian women to die at the hands of a serial killer. The new government said the revelation underscored the need for a national inquiry.

Earlier Tuesday, Mr. Trudeau told chiefs at their annual meeting in Gatineau, Que., that the Liberals would deliver on their campaign promises, including the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which detailed the abuses suffered in the residential-school system. He also said Canada's missing and murdered indigenous women "deserve justice."

Perry Bellegarde, the National Chief for the Assembly of First Nations, said the address was well-received, noting the leaders "were especially pleased" when the Prime Minister spoke of the inquiry.

"We are still feeling the intergenerational effects of colonization and residential schools," he said. "We still see that every day in our communities – the breakdown of self-identity, self-worth, the breakdown of families, communities and nations ... We need to bring back that warrior spirit."

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/i-will-be-your-partner-trudeau-tells-first-nations-chiefs/article27641251/>

Quebec aboriginal community 'touched' by launch of national inquiry

Leaders to meet with families, service workers in coming weeks for inquiry into missing, murdered women

[CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 08, 2015 6:17 PM ET Last Updated: Dec 09, 2015 11:29 AM ET



Left to right: Jenny Hervieux, Caroline Tremblay, Nathalie Guay and Pénélope Guay, of the Missinak Community Home in Quebec City call the national inquiry 'historic.' (Marika Wheeler/CBC)

People in Quebec who have suffered because of violence against indigenous women are applauding the start of a national inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.

"It's historic. I'm very touched," said Pénélope Guay, who runs an aboriginal women's shelter in Quebec City.

She founded the Missinak Community Home with her daughter, Nathalie Guay.

"Today, I feel there is hope that things will change, and we'll know what happened to those women," Nathalie Guay said.

The RCMP found in 2014 nearly 1,200 documented cases of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls between 1980 and 2012, a number the Mounties said exceeded previous public estimates.



Pénélope Guay co-founded an aboriginal women's shelter in Quebec City 25 years ago. (Marika Wheeler/CBC)

A 2015 United Nations report found that young First Nations, Métis and Inuit women were five times more likely to die under violent circumstances than their non-aboriginal counterparts.

This afternoon, the federal government announced the launch of its two-phase inquiry.

The first phase of the inquiry would determine its objectives, focus and parameters.

"As a first step, we will meet with the families in the National Capital Region with the goal of hearing their views on the design of the inquiry and what it needs to achieve," Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould said at a news conference Tuesday on Parliament Hill.

"And over the next two months, we will hear from more families, other indigenous peoples, national aboriginal organizations and a range of front-line services workers and others.

Phase two will be the inquiry itself, which the government plans to launch in spring 2016.

In Quebec City, aboriginal women who were victims of violence said they have been waiting years for this news.

"I am very relieved and very touched. I am very proud of the prime minister, and feel that aboriginal issues are finally moving forward," said Lydia Benjamin-Hervieux, who had a violent boyfriend and recently completed therapy aimed at aboriginal people who have a substance abuse problem.

Johnny Wylde, who also watched the announcement closely, hopes the inquiry can bring his family answers.

His daughter Sindy Ruperthouse, 45, has been missing from the western Quebec community of Val-D'Or for the last 18 months.

"I want to know what happened to my daughter. I want to know soon," he said.

Corrections

- An earlier version of this story said Pénélope Guay founded the Missinak Community Home with her daughter, Nathalie Guay, 25 years ago. In fact, the community home was founded six years ago.

Dec 09, 2015 11:24 AM ET

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-aboriginal-community-inquiry-1.3356317>

Missing and murdered indigenous women inquiry resonates in Atlantic Canada

Family and friends of Loretta Saunders say she was 'passionate' about getting government to start inquiry

By Diane Paquette, [CBC News](#) Posted: Dec 09, 2015 7:00 AM AT Last Updated: Dec 09, 2015 10:25 AM AT



The body of Loretta Saunders, a 26-year-old Inuk woman, was found on the median of Route 2 of the Trans-Canada Highway, west of Salisbury, N.B. on Feb. 26. Her killers were sentenced to life in prison in April. (Facebook)

The Liberal government's announcement about an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women is being welcomed by those closest to Loretta Saunders, an Inuk woman from Labrador who was murdered in Halifax almost two years ago.

"It was one of things that my daughter was really fighting for. She really wanted to see it done," said Miriam Saunders, Loretta Saunders's mother.

On Tuesday, three federal ministers said the government [is moving forward with the first phase of an inquiry](#) that's expected to cost about \$40 million and take at least two years.

Miriam Saunders was keenly watching the announcement at her home in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador.

"To me, I'm happy to see it — and for the groups that were fighting for it," she told CBC's *Mainstreet*.

"And I'm sorry that it took my daughter's death to even come to terms with the words that I didn't even know. We're so far in darkness and it took my daughter's death for me to even realize how so many of us here don't have help. And now I know."

The announcement was led by Carolyn Bennett, the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs; Patricia Hajdu, the Minister of the Status of Women; and Jody Wilson-Raybould, the Minister of Justice.

"Over the last decade, many many voices have been heard, asking for a national inquiry. We have also seen many reports, talking about the need to know more about this issue," Bennett said.

"The need to undertake a national inquiry is clear. This is a priority for me, for my colleagues and for the government."

'It is time for justice'

Since 1980, about 1,100 aboriginal women in Canada have gone missing or been killed.

For years, [the Conservative government led by Stephen Harper resisted calls for an inquiry](#), saying the problem shouldn't be viewed as a sociological one but a criminal issue that could be solved by improving laws that prevent crime.

Justin Trudeau told voters during the recent federal election that if his party was elected, the Liberals would call an inquiry and now his government is moving ahead on that promise.



Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould lays out the first steps of her Liberal government's commitment to hold an inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women. (CBC News)

Today's announcement on Parliament Hill began with a prayer from elder Claudette Commanda who's a member of the Algonquin First Nation.

"Creator, I ask that the grandmothers and the grandfathers of the four directions join us today.

"We remember in our prayers the families of our women and our girls. Comfort them, Creator, with your kindness and your love and we will embrace this work in a good way."

Commanda also told the crowd that many Canadians have been waiting a long time for this.

"It is time to hear their voices. It is time for justice."

Family focus

Heidi Marshall, with Nova Scotia Native Women's Association, says the government's announcement had a progressive tone.

"As I listened to the announcement today, I was very touched by Jody Wilson-Raybould's remarks and also Carolyn Bennett's remarks," Marshall said.

"I heard things like 'inclusive', 'culturally relevant', 'talking to the families' and one thing that it really stresses is that this is not just an indigenous problem. It's a societal issue."

Marshall thinks it's a good idea to consult with the families of victims before the government proceeds with the inquiry itself.

"It has to be community driven," she said.

"We need to have community-led responses by the families of missing and murdered aboriginal women. We need to honour these women that we lost. We need to keep them in our hearts. We need to keep them alive in our hearts."

Marshall hopes the inquiry will also eventually address the root causes of violence.

"We need to educate society on indigenous issues. We need to discuss the root causes and look at the poverty in indigenous communities right now."

'I was feeling pretty emotional'

The announcement was also particularly poignant for Darryl Leroux, a professor of sociology and criminology at Saint Mary's University in Halifax.

He was Loretta Saunders's thesis advisor when she was murdered.

"I was feeling pretty emotional. I was chatting with Delilah, Loretta's sister at the same time [while I watched the announcement] so that made it a little bit more raw," Leroux said.

Saunders's thesis focused on the problem of missing and murdered aboriginal women.

"I was thinking of Loretta and a number of other family members that I've gotten to know in the past two years now because of what happened to Loretta. So I was thinking about a lot of people that I know and at least on the level of a public announcement of this magnitude how relieved many of them would be feeling."

Leroux says he was pleasantly surprised by how honest and direct the ministers were in their speeches to the crowd on Parliament Hill.

"Carolyn Bennett basically finished the press conference by saying that racism and sexism kill, and that she was hoping that Canadians would come to understand that," he said.

"As someone who works on these topics and works with students like Loretta and others who are really passionate about their concerns for justice when it comes to indigenous people — I think that was really a pleasant surprise."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/mmiw-inquiry-resonates-with-maritimers-1.3356502>

Special Topic: Residential Schools, TRC, & '60s Scoop

Throne speech to address reconciliation with First Nations

By Kristy Kirkup The Canadian Press, December 4, 2015 6:22 am



OTTAWA – When Gov. Gen. David Johnston delivers the speech from the throne on Friday, he is expected to address reconciliation with Canada’s Aboriginal Peoples as one of the government’s central commitments in the new session of Parliament.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett said she will hear the address for the first time when it is delivered in the Upper Chamber but she points out that the prime minister has signalled clearly and often that the relationship with aboriginal peoples “is the most important relationship to him and to Canada.”

“I think that the chiefs and indigenous people across Canada have been heartened by what exactly is in the mandate letter of every minister,” Bennett said in an interview with The Canadian Press.

Indeed, the Liberals’ frequent reference to the need to forge a fresh relationship with the country’s First Nation, Inuit and Metis peoples means expectations are already running high.

And with a series of key events set for the coming weeks, hopes will undoubtedly climb even further.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has confirmed he will address a special chiefs meeting next Tuesday hosted by the Assembly of First Nations in Ottawa – a gathering that falls a week ahead of the final report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission probing Canada’s dark residential school legacy.

Trudeau has committed to implementing all 94 recommendations put forward by the TRC earlier this year, including a pledge to move forward on an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.

Bennett said she hopes to unveil details of a pre-inquiry consultation process shortly but she has stressed the need to set out the right terms of reference, the role for families and the role of ceremony.

“People are relieved that we have taken this extra care to ... commit to the inquiry but also to make sure that even the process for the pre-inquiry engagement be as caring as it can be for the families,” she said.

“We hope we will find that balance of the urgency of the inquiry but also the importance of getting it right.”

The government has clearly made the inquiry a high priority, said AFN Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day.

“This minister has been very close to the issue,” he said.

Day anticipates more details will be available following Johnston’s address.

“I think the speech from the throne just formalizes the work plan of this government over the next year and this certainly has been a high priority on that list,” he said.

The throne speech will also address the centrepiece of the Liberals’ winning electoral platform – a plan to raise taxes on Canada’s biggest breadwinners, while easing the burden on middle-income earners.

The Liberals have said rejigging the federal tax brackets will be their first action in Parliament.

The proposal, however, has attracted criticism.

The New Democrats say the Liberal plan will benefit higher-earning Canadians and provide nothing for low-income earners.

The NDP also wants the government to cut taxes for people in the lowest tax bracket, made up of those who earn less than \$44,701 per year.

This week, the C.D. Howe Institute think-tank released a study arguing the Liberal tax changes will likely lead to multibillion-dollar annual revenue shortfalls for Ottawa and the provinces.

The report said high-income earners will likely make greater efforts to avoid paying the higher taxes.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2379835/throne-speech-to-address-reconciliation-with-first-nations/>

Classroom guide on residential schools helps kids face dark chapter in Canadian history

Culturally sensitive curriculum is designed by a non-profit that has worked on similar materials on the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide.



Children and a nun at Cross Lake Indian Residential School in Manitoba, 1940.

By: [May Warren](#) Staff Reporter, Published on Sat Dec 05 2015

Theodore Fontaine doesn't think of himself as a *survivor* of residential schools.

He's a *victor*.

Separated from his parents at age 7, he was ripped from a childhood spent learning the traditions of the Sagkeeng Anishinaabe First Nation, north of Winnipeg, trapping muskrats and mink at 5 or 6 years old with his family.

He lived at Fort Alexander Indian Residential School for 10 years, just a few kilometres from his home, where he suffered physical, sexual and emotional abuse and was shamed for speaking Ojibway.

"People don't have a clue what happened in those institutions," said Fontaine.

Now 73, he spends his time speaking to audiences across the country about his experiences, after years battling the dark legacy of a system that taught him to hate himself, his culture and his family.

“It took me a certain time, a certain age until I started beating the system,” he said.

“Everything that you hear, probably 100 times over, it’s worse than what you’ve heard.”

Helping people better understand what happened to him, [and the 150,000 other First Nations, Métis and Inuit children](#) forced into residential schools across the country run by churches and funded by the government, is the goal of a new classroom resource guide aimed at students from Grade 7 on.

It’s been developed by a non-profit organization called Facing History and Ourselves, with input from Fontaine.

For 40 years, the organization has created classroom resources on humanity’s lowest points, from the Holocaust to the Rwandan genocide, to support teachers in starting difficult conversations in the classroom.

The residential school guide, which also covers indigenous history to provide context, is the first resource it has done on Canadian history.

Leora Schaefer, director of the Facing History and Ourselves Toronto office, the need for such a resource was crystallized when she was leading a workshop on Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet and a First Nations woman in the audience asked why the organization did not address some of the darkest moments of Canada’s own past.

“She stood up and she was quivering with anger and frustration, with all reason,” Schaefer recalls.

“And I knew that it was true. I knew that we needed that resource and that our teachers needed that resource.”

Several [of the 94 recommendations made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) last June spoke to the need for education on residential schools, and one specifically calls for curriculum materials to help kids learn about the legacy.

In the existing Ontario curriculum, there are “opportunities” to learn about residential schools, and in high school, residential schools and treaties are a mandatory part of the Grade 10 history course, confirmed Gary Wheeler, a spokesperson for the ministry.

He added in an email that, following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s recommendations, “the ministry will continue to work with our Aboriginal and other partners to revise our curriculum to include greater requirements for students to learn about the residential school experience.”

But Schaefer said that since many teachers are not familiar with material themselves, they may be tempted to skim over the content because they don’t feel confident in their knowledge, or don’t know how to approach the difficult discussions.

Facing History and Ourselves already has a relationship with the TDSB through work on a course dealing with genocide and crimes against humanity.

The organization is holding a workshop to support GTA teachers who want to incorporate the guide into their classrooms.

By working with individual school boards and teachers, Schaefer hopes the resource can be used in as many classrooms as possible across the country to engage students in the subject.

Fontaine said he knows it will have an impact.

“Even if it’s one classroom. (The kids in this) one classroom are going to be adults at some point. They’re going to be leaders,” he said.

“That’s what I live for now, to educate Canadians that we’re real, and we’re not bad.”

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/12/05/classroom-guide-on-residential-schools-helps-kids-face-dark-chapter-in-canadian-history.html>

There will be some hard things said: Muslim group hears about Truth and Reconciliation

[Joanne Laucius](#)

Published on: December 6, 2015 | Last Updated: December 6, 2015 5:21 PM EST



Ferrukh Faruqui grew up in Winnipeg and went to medical school there, but admits she knew little of the historic struggles of Canada’s First Nations. Chris Mikula / Ottawa Citizen

It's been a time of soul-searching for Muslims trying to find their place in Canada. That's why it's the right time to hear about Truth and Reconciliation right from the source, says the organizer of a panel that brought Muslim and Aboriginal people together.

"I thought we should take a step back and put our own problems into perspective," said Ferrukh Faruqi, who moderated the event on Saturday.

Faruqi grew up in Winnipeg and went to medical school there, but admits she knew little of the historic struggles of Canada's First Nations. "We want to listen to truths long buried and offer our support."

The panel organized by the Ottawa chapter of the Canadian Council for Muslim Women consisted of Faruqi as moderator and three guests: Minwaashin Lodge co-founder Irene Compton; Victoria Tenasco-Commanda, the culture co-ordinator at the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, and Shady Hafez, a Carleton University student whose mother is Algonquin and father is Syrian.

The panel spent much of its time talking about echoes of the residential school system, which operated for more than 150 years. Some 150,000 aboriginal children went through the system, and thousands never returned home. The last school closed only about 20 years ago. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which probed the history of that school system and its lasting repercussions were released last June in a summary report. A final report is to be released Dec. 15.

"I am going to warn you that there will be some hard things said," warned Compton before she started to speak.

Compton's mother was sent to live in a residential school at the age of three after the death of her mother. At 16, Compton's mother was forced into a marriage with a 46-year-old trapper. The family lived on the land, often in a tent even in the harshest weather. Her husband was abusive, and she left her children and ran away to Winnipeg. There she remarried a Korean War veteran and had a second family that included Compton.

"Our house was totally dysfunctional, totally chaotic, but I survived," said Compton.

Of her mother's nine children, only two remain. "I sometimes think our hearts are broken. The intergenerational trauma is still playing its way out," said Compton.

Tenasco-Commanda is working on a PhD in education. Although no one in her family was sent to a residential school, she says all aboriginal people continue to live with the fallout.

"We think of it as 'blood memory.' It is passed on in our DNA."

After children were taken away, the communities felt lost. The children returned, but often couldn't speak the language. They could pursue an education, but there was

discrimination, she said. Abuse and alcoholism have been normalized. Children were placed in non-aboriginal foster families. Schools still don't offer a space for the indigenous world view.

"We are caught in a world where service providers have to provide data and numbers. It's all about numbers. For indigenous people, it's not about numbers."

Hafez was raised by his Syrian grandparents but spent his weekends at Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg north of Ottawa. "On the immigrant side, Canada was saviour. And on the other side, it was a destructive force," he said.

Hafez said there are not just questions of historical injustices, but recurring injustices. "Kids are being taken away every single day."

What can nonindigenous people do if they want to offer support? asked Faruqi.

"Give us breathing room," responded Hafez. "Give us a year of non-interference."

Faruqi hopes that the panel will be the start of a long dialogue between indigenous and Muslim communities.

"I am amazed by the lack of bitterness," she said.

Direct Link: <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/there-will-be-some-hard-things-said-muslim-group-hears-about-truth-and-reconciliation>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

Seminary eyes repatriation after clash over artifacts



Fishhook by a Haida or Tlingit artist.

By Malcolm Gay Globe Staff December 05, 2015



Baby carrier by an Anishinaabe (Chippewa/Ojibwa) artist.

Federal officials have accused the Andover Newton Theological School of running afoul of the law in its handling of a collection of Native American and native Hawaiian cultural objects, the culmination of an institutional clash that brought to light a little known treasure trove of artifacts.

Portions of the collection — owned by the seminary but housed by the Peabody Essex Museum since the 1940s — could now be returned to descendants and affiliated tribes for whom the objects have special cultural significance.

In a letter to Andover Newton, the Department of the Interior charges that the school has failed to comply with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, a 1990 law that seeks to return funerary objects, sacred items, and objects of cultural patrimony to their rightful tribal heirs.

In a first step toward returning the objects to indigenous people, the officials have advised the Newton seminary to make a list of all the Native American cultural items in the collection and submit it to any tribe that may have an interest, as well as to federal officials. There are around 160 Native American and native Hawaiian objects in the roughly 1,100-piece collection, which also includes artifacts from other cultures.

“It’s a complex task, but we’re undertaking it so that we can repatriate the items,” said Andover Newton president Martin B. Copenhaver.

The existence of the collection was not well known among indigenous people.

“We didn’t know anything about it; it was a surprise,” said Rosita Worl, president of the Sealaska Heritage Institute, which represents several native Alaskan peoples.

The collection is thought to contain objects associated with 52 Native American tribes and native Hawaiians, including many items such as a ritualistic halibut hook that Worl said are no mere artifacts.

“These objects embody the spirits of our ancestors,” she said. “The current generation is tied both to our ancestors and to our future generations, so it basically ensures our cultural survival.”

Worl said she first heard about the collection this summer from Peabody Essex Museum director Dan Monroe, then promptly requested a governmental compliance investigation. “I keep hoping these guys, who are supposedly Christian, would do the Christian thing and return these objects that they are holding illegally,” she said of the seminary.

According to Monroe, most of the Andover Newton collection was assembled in the 19th century through missionary work. Although the seminary and the Salem museum partnered for decades to care for the collection, the relationship began to sour in 2014, when Andover Newton began actively exploring the possibility of selling roughly 80 of the collection’s most valuable Native American items.

For the museum, the prospect of a sale was troubling.

“Upholding the rights of Native Americans and native Hawaiians . . . and ensuring that those rights are not potentially compromised is and has been very important to us,” said Monroe. “It seemed to us inconsistent with their stated values and with their purpose as an institution to sell an important part of the religious heritage of 52 Native American tribes and native Hawaiians in order to strengthen their bottom line.”

Andover Newton’s [financial difficulties became public](#) recently after school leaders issued a letter announcing plans to reduce operations and relocate to a smaller facility. “Andover Newton’s current mode of being,” the letter stated, “is not financially sustainable.”

But Copenhaver disputed the idea that the seminary’s efforts were driven primarily by a desire to strengthen its financial position.

“It was always to appropriately make them available to other museums or collectors who would donate to museums,” said Copenhaver. “There might have been some financial benefit to the school in doing that, but to paint the picture that we were looking to a fire sale, to sell these objects to the highest bidder to save the school financially, is just not an accurate picture.”

Copenhaver noted that only a handful of pieces from the collection have been displayed at Peabody Essex and said the seminary hoped to make them more widely available to the

public. In a letter to federal officials this summer, he argued that some of the objects were not subject to the law, writing, “The trustees of Andover Newton intend to sell those items only to persons and institutions that fully respect the heritage, history and spiritual traditions of Native Americans.”

But the question quickly became whether the seminary had the right to sell any of the artifacts in the first place. Following Worl’s request, federal officials determined on Sept. 29 that the seminary — and thus all Native American objects in its collection — was subject to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, which would forbid the sale and mandate the return of certain sacred objects.



Djilakons figure by a Haida artist.

Violation of the law is punishable by a base fine of up to \$5,000, though additional penalties may be assessed.

Copenhaver said the seminary accepts the government’s ruling and is working toward compliance. But relations between the two institutions remain strained.

The seminary faults the museum for not informing it earlier that all the Native American objects in the collection were subject to the law.

“It’s laced with irony that the Peabody Essex Museum would point the finger at us when this is their field, not ours,” said Copenhaver. “We’re not a museum. I wonder why the Peabody Essex Museum — this is their business — that they were not more thorough in their assessment of it and communicating with us about it.”

Copenhaver maintains that the museum had earlier advised the school that only 10 Native American items in the collection were subject to the federal protection law.

But PEM director Monroe denies that, arguing that the museum does not have standing to declare whether a collection is subject to the law or to make individual determinations of cultural patrimony. He said he repeatedly told the seminary that if the law applied to the school, then all Native American objects in the collection would be affected, though only members of affiliated tribes and other descendants could make repatriation claims.

“We said, ‘We don’t know. We’re not qualified to make those determinations,’ ” Monroe related. “ ‘But based on repatriation claims we’re familiar with that have been made at other institutions, here are 10 objects that could conceivably be subject to repatriation claims, but it’s not a determination we can make.’ ” He added, “We suggested that until they resolve that issue there would be a cloud over any sale.”

Monroe said he repeatedly urged the school not to go through with the sale.

“At one point I wrote the entire board of trustees and argued that it would be extremely unfortunate to proceed with this plan,” said Monroe. He said he argued that “it would likely cause controversy, and that it could result in a variety of consequences that would not strengthen their hand, or capability to raise money, or underscore or strengthen their integrity as an institution. It had, sadly, absolutely no effect.”

Copenhaver, who said the seminary always wanted to adhere to the letter of the law, now wants to close the painful chapter. “We’re just taking a very different course now,” he said. “We’re proceeding to look for repatriation.”

Direct Link: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/2015/12/05/federal-officials-cite-newton-seminary-after-clash-over-native-american-artifact-collection/DWCSai0b7LwfizA7ZbKDtM/story.html>

Native American-style 'Star Wars' blankets fly off shelves

Limited number of each design

Published 8:14 PM MST Dec 03, 2015

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. —The new "Star Wars" movie hits screens in two weeks.

The market is flooded with merchandise, and some of it features a distinctively southwestern style.

Native American-style blankets are flying off the shelves almost faster than shop owners can order them. There's one for the new movie, "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," as well as the three original "Star Wars" films.

Each design is limited to 1,977 blankets, the year the first movie came out.

"They do have some of the Native American influence in some of the jacquard pattern, like our regular blankets," said Betsy Carpenter, with Pendleton Woolen Mills.

Native American store owners say they hope the blankets will bring more awareness and acceptance of different cultures.

Direct Link: <http://www.koat.com/news/native-americanstyle-star-wars-blankets-fly-off-shelves/36788008>

Program offers home loans for Native Americans



Brandon Caruso of Today's Lending and a member of the Cherokee Nation helps Native American families go from renters to homeowners. Lesa Jones for TB&LN

Posted: Friday, December 4, 2015 12:00 am

By Lesa Jones TB&LN editor

Homeownership has long been considered the door to the American Dream. But for too many Native Americans and Alaska Natives, renting has become their way of life.

According to statistics in "Continuity and Change: Demographic, Socioeconomic and Housing Conditions of American Indians and Alaska Natives," a study completed by the Housing and Urban Development, more than 509,000 American Indian Alaska Natives (AIAN) own their homes nationwide.

And the number significantly increased from 2000 to 2010, up 16 percent compared to an 8 percent increase for non-AIAN households.

Nevertheless, the AIAN homeownership rate of 54 percent is still considerably lower than the non-AIAN rate of 65 percent.

Brandon Caruso of Today's Lending, 1629 S. Peoria Ave., is working within the Native American community to secure home loans through the Section 184 Program through Housing and Urban Development. He spoke recently to the American Indian Chamber of Commerce Oklahoma about a mortgage program for Native Americans who currently have a CDIB card.

"Statistically, we Native Americans are much less likely to own a home," said Caruso, a member of the Cherokee Nation. "We have a long history of being renters, but this program is an opportunity to break that chain."

The HUD publication cited research which indicates the lower homeownership rate is due to many barriers experienced by Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

Some of the barriers include economic and geographic isolation, legal issues stemming from limited rights over land, reluctance of private lenders to engage a tenuous market, low incomes, poor credit histories and a lack of financial literacy.

Today's Lending is a family owned business that has been operating for 10 years. The 184 Program has been available since 1992.

According to Caruso, many tribes have mortgage assistance programs that will work in conjunction with the 184 Program.

"Basically, there are MAP funds set up for you to help you get into a home," he said.

"They range from \$1,500-\$20,000, depending on the tribe. Muskogee Creek, I believe, is \$25,000. This money goes toward down payment and closing costs. It will ultimately bring down the cost of your loan and make the monthly mortgage payments lower."

MAP funds are typically dedicated to first-time homebuyers. However, the 184 Program is not dedicated only to first-time homebuyers.

"Even if you've had a foreclosure in the past, you can still access the program as long as there has been 24 months in between," Caruso said. "However, if you've been in a 184 Program loan and you've been in foreclosure, it deems you ineligible for another loan."

Caruso says the program sells itself.

"The program has lower interest rates," he said. "We do go by the market rates of the day, so they do change daily. Typically, it's pretty low. There is no minimum credit score, which is a huge help for people who have just come out of college and haven't had an opportunity to build credit, as compared to a FHA loan, where you have to be 640 and above."

Another benefit of the program is a manual underwriting process as compared to an automated system. The loan information is put in front of an actual person allowing more flexibility in approvals.

The program is open to all tribes in eligible states and more and more states are becoming part of the program, Caruso said.

And there is a diversity in the type of homes eligible for financing.

“You can be in any type of home as long as it’s a fixed structure,” Caruso said. “It has to have a concrete slab, no hitch, and it can’t be going anywhere.”

Ultimately, the program is helping Native Americans become homeowners and find a place they can call their own.

Direct Link:

http://www.tulsaworld.com/business/tulsabusiness/business_news/money/program-offers-home-loans-for-native-americans/article_c49fc2b7-4567-5a8a-aa2b-84dd6ff576cf.html

Chippewa Cree official sentenced in corruption investigation

The Associated Press, December 3, 2015

HELENA, Mont.

A former Chippewa Cree tribal official was sentenced Thursday to more than three years in prison after he pleaded guilty to taking bribes from contractors that included cash, jewelry, furniture, a saddle and an all-expense-paid family trip to Las Vegas, prosecutors said.

U.S. District Judge Brian Morris also ordered Timothy Rosette to pay \$600,000 in restitution to the tribe.

Rosette was the director of the tribe's roads branch and the head of its health clinic's environmental health unit, giving him the authority to award contracts and payments for agencies of the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation.

Between 2009 and 2013, Rosette took hundreds of cash payments for awarding construction and trucking contracts awarded to Hunter Burns Construction Co., federal prosecutors said. He also accepted gifts from the company, co-owned by Hunter Burns

and psychologist James Eastlick, including \$6,000 worth of furniture and the Las Vegas vacation for Rosette and his family.

Over that four-year period, Hunter Burns Construction was awarded more than \$831,000 in contracts by the reservation's health clinic and \$690,000 by the roads agency, prosecutors said.

After the Rocky Boy's Reservation flooded in 2010, Eastlick called in another contractor to help with the trucking work, according to the U.S. attorney's office. Havre businessman Shad Huston's companies paid Rosette cash kickbacks in exchange for \$833,000 in contract payments between 2010 and 2012.

Huston also gave Rosette a down payment for a new sport-utility vehicle, a ring, a pair of diamond earrings and a saddle, prosecutors said.

Rosette approved false and inflated invoices for Huston and Burns' companies for their personal benefit, prosecutors said.

Burns, Huston and Eastlick previously pleaded guilty in separate corruption cases that are part of the same wide-reaching federal investigation into the mishandling of federal money on Montana's Indian reservations.

Read more here: <http://www.kansascity.com/news/article47839500.html#storylink=cpy>

LaDuke, a Native American activist, speaks at St. Bonaventure



Winona LaDuke, an activist and author from the White Earth reservation in northern Minnesota, spoke Thursday at St. Bonaventure University on "Race, Gender and the Environment."

Posted: Friday, December 4, 2015 3:58 pm

By Rich Place, Managing Editor

ST. BONAVENTURE — Winona LaDuke, a Native American activist and author, spoke Thursday at St. Bonaventure University about several women who are leading or participating in various causes across the country.

In a lecture sponsored by the university's Diversity Action Committee and the #RaceMatters program, LaDuke was invited to give a presentation on "Race, Gender and the Environment."

She spoke about Honor the Earth, a non-profit organization she co-founded and their recent efforts to stop pipelines from being built, including one proposed for across the White Earth reservation and northern Minnesota, where she is from.

She also told the stories of several women and the impact they have had in their efforts to protect the environment across the country.

"What I'm going to do is tell some stories about some remarkable women and share them with you," she told a fairly diverse audience of students, professors and other members of the public.

She first showed a picture of her sister — "doesn't she look scary?" she said with a laugh — on a horse during a recent protest in Washington, D.C. against the Keystone XL Pipeline. The protest featured several participants riding horseback down the National Mall.

Another story was about Hawane Rios, one of the protestors of the Thirty Meter Telescope in Hawaii. The State Supreme Court in Hawaii the day prior to LaDuke's lecture rescinded the construction permit for the telescope, which was planned for Mauna Kea, dormant volcano there.

"Anytime anybody has a victory against something so large and you are just a normal person," is good, LaDuke said.

Her presentation featured about a half dozen such stories of women from across the country.

She talked briefly about when the Animas River in southwest Colorado was contaminated in August when a safety team from the Environmental Protection Agency accidentally spilled contaminants into the waterway.

"Who is keeping an eye on what is going on in our world?" she asked. "It grieves me — it grieves many of us I'm sure — when you hear a river was poisoned."

Among her slides was also a picture of "Last Breath of the Black Snake," an image by artist Michael Horse that depicts cowboys and Native Americans fighting the Keystone XL Pipeline.

In the ledger, a black snake representing the Keystone XL Pipeline is being defeated by the individuals in the picture. According to LaDuke, she is represented in the painting riding an Appaloosa horse she is known for.

LaDuke, twice a vice presidential nominee on the Green Party ticket with Ralph Nader, was often unabashed at times throughout the presentation. She spoke matter-of-factly of her stance against fracking, for example, which earned applause from some in the audience.

The presentation focused on the women fighting for the various causes she outlined and what it takes for them to stand up for what they feel is right.

“People need support to fight evil,” she said. “I think that’s what I’m trying to tell you. Sometimes you need to get out of your area of comfort (zone).”

LaDuke said she has hopes for an “elegant transition” out of the fossil fuel area. Such an idea is possible, she believes, because of the inefficiency of fossil fuels.

“It turns out the fossil fuel era is really, really, super inefficient and that, in fact, for that car I’m driving and that you’re all driving, it’s 16 percent efficient,” she said. “For every six gallons of gas I put in, only one gallon actually moves the damn thing.”

An electric engine, by contrast, can be 60 percent efficient, she said, crediting the facts to an article written by Mara Prentiss in a magazine published by Harvard University, LaDuke’s alma mater.

Although LaDuke said it is argued renewable resources cannot meet current demand, she said, “my personal and humble suggestion is: why would you want to meet present demand if it’s so inefficient?”

She ended her presentation with an inspiration to those who are part of working toward a specific cause in relation to the pictures of women she showed during her presentation.

“Change doesn’t happen because there is a social change fairy,” she said. “It happens because people do something and you get outside of your arena of comfort.”

(This story appears in the Dec. 10, 2015 edition of The Salamanca Press.)

Direct Link: http://www.salamancapress.com/news/laduke-a-native-american-activist-speaks-at-st-bonaventure/article_d5d15922-9ac9-11e5-993a-5b3d28f51f93.html

‘The Revenant,’ Starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Is the Most Breathtakingly Beautiful Film of the Year

12.04.154:00 PM ET

This 19th-century survival epic is awash in stunning vistas and features an uncompromising, award-worthy turn from its star.

Don't judge a film by its production problems—a lesson established years ago by James Cameron's *Titanic* and reconfirmed now by another big-budget [Leonardo DiCaprio](#) project, *The Revenant*.

Writer/director Alejandro G. Iñárritu's follow-up to his Best Picture-winning *Birdman* is an old-school western that arrives on Christmas Day upon a wave of ominous press about its torturous production. Those difficulties [reportedly included](#) a budget that spiraled from \$95 million to a supposed \$165 million; a shoot complicated by Iñárritu's desire to make the film sequentially and to use only natural light; and incessant weather-related delays that necessitated a relocation from Canada to Argentina, and forced co-star [Tom Hardy](#) to drop out of his subsequent role in *Suicide Squad*. From the sound of it, *The Revenant* was an arduous chore to make. And as the final product proves, it was definitely worth the trouble.

Inspired by Michael Punke's 2002 based-on-real-events novel, Iñárritu's latest is, on the surface, a straightforward revenge film.

It concerns 1820s explorer and fur trapper Hugh Glass (DiCaprio), who's mauled by a ferocious grizzly bear in the American wilderness and then left for dead by his comrade John Fitzgerald (a captivatingly cold-eyed Tom Hardy)—albeit not before Fitzgerald, more interested in self-preservation than loyalty or honor, kills Hugh's half-Native American son Hawk (Forrest Goodluck) in plain view of the crippled Glass. It's an especially brutal blow to Glass, who, as seen in surreal flashbacks, already lost his Native American wife to American soldiers, one of whom he killed in order to protect his adolescent offspring.

Though horrifically clawed to pieces, Glass literally rises from his own grave (the first in a series of resurrections) and sets out across the harsh land in search of Fitzgerald. His subsequent mission plays out with few plot twists, as Iñárritu and Mark L. Smith's script, devoid of the intertwined-strand message-making that plagued the filmmaker's *Babel*, proceeds like a single-minded B-picture about one man's unrelenting quest for the vengeance he craves, and deserves.

That resolutely one-way trajectory makes *The Revenant*, in a basic sense, a throwback to old school pulp fictions—especially the back-from-the-dead *Point Blank* and *The Limey*. While the director doesn't complicate his familiar genre tale, he does embellish it in ways that both enhance its visceral thrills, and deepen its themes.



Working with famed cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki (an Oscar winner each of the past two years, for *Gravity* and *Birdman*), Iñárritu delivers one breathtaking snapshot of suffering and tenacity after another, in the process making *The Revenant* the most awe-inspiringly beautiful film of the year. The duo's camera begins by gliding in and out of a chaotic battle with fluid ferocity, moving in to close-up and out to grand, expansive panoramas (and back again) with a masterful grasp of spatial dynamics. Such aesthetic virtuosity is ever-present, with Iñárritu and Lubezki crafting a bevy of prolonged single-take centerpieces that vacillate between intense intimacy and large-scale wonder and terror, all of them shot with a naturalistic splendor—the majesty of forests coated in fresh snow, the formidable iciness of roaring rivers, the gnarliness of torn-to-shreds human and animal carcasses—that has a rugged, tactile quality to it.

In other words, you can just about feel the grit, grime, spittle, blood, and tears coating everyone—and everything—in *The Revenant*, which conveys precisely what it would be like to exist in Glass's weathered shoes. Despite its A-list pedigree, Iñárritu's film is an out-there experiential work that situates viewers in a very particular time and place, fighting through the elemental forces—external and internal—preying upon Glass. In that regard, it has something in common with Gus Van Sant's *Gerry* and *Elephant*, experimental indies that articulated unspoken ideas through atmospherics.

Iñárritu's many breathtaking compositions, meanwhile—gazing up at swaying treetops, at lone figures amidst barren landscapes, at heavenly sunrises and sunsets, and at rushing water (not to mention a canteen decorated with a spiral-circle design)—are all directly modeled after the work of auteur Terrence Malick, as are the hushed voiceovers from unseen characters and oblique flashbacks to moments of bliss and desolation.

Such sights invariably come across as borderline plagiaristic, just as Iñárritu's single-take shots resonate as *Birdman*-ish look-at-me gestures. In *The Revenant*, however, Iñárritu's brazenly showy tendencies are justified by his imposing formal artistry, and by the way his visuals work in tandem with his story's weightier concerns. Be it the up-close-and-frighteningly-personal bear attack that leaves Glass at death's door, a sequence where Glass takes shelter from a storm by disemboweling a dead horse and climbing inside its hollow body cavity, or a magnificent flight from Native American attackers in which the camera mounts up alongside Glass on horseback, and then hovers over the gorge he

plummets off of, the film captures the harsh, unforgiving exquisiteness of the untamed American wild. It also, crucially, gets at the grueling nature of survival: how persevering requires suffering; how physical pain can be dwarfed (and negated) by emotional agony; and how God cares little for pleas of help and salvation, if He even exists at all (other than in the next morsel of meat tasted by a famished tongue).

Bolstered by a cracked-lip, mouth-foaming performance of anguish and fury by DiCaprio, in a physical role that often requires him to go long, silent stretches crawling about the ragged earth like a newborn (re)learning to walk, *The Revenant* is laced with protective-father undercurrents but, at heart, is about the primal impulse to endure. Glass dons the fur coat of his bear attacker but eventually becomes an animal in man's clothing. That ironic twist speaks to the film's portrait of survival as an instinct shared by all living creatures, and which, as seen in the actions of Glass, Fitzgerald, or a Native American chief looking for his kidnapped daughter, supersedes notions of morality, fairness, or decency.

Direct Link: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/12/04/the-revenant-starring-leonardo-dicaprio-is-the-most-breathtakingly-beautiful-film-of-the-year.html>

Rules of Government: Indigenous Peoples and Nation States Disagree

[Duane Champagne](#)

12/5/15

Indigenous Peoples want contemporary nation states to be organized along principles that make sense to them under indigenous rules of political process. The cultural incongruity of political organization and political process between indigenous nations and nation states continues to be a troubling point. Indigenous Peoples have respect for many different cultures, worldviews, and rules of political organization and pass these views and expectations onto the organization of nation states.

During treaty negotiations, Indigenous Peoples expected certain kinds of actions and respect from nation states like the United States and Canada. Treaties and agreements of friendship were made among Indigenous Peoples for thousands of years before the formation of current nation states. Treaties of friendship required respectful relations, mutual agreements, responsibility, understanding, and predictable future conduct. Relations built on trust were central to indigenous political and treaty agreements. Treaties of peace and friendship can be seen as extensions of kinship relations to other nations. By extending kinship ties of mutual respect, sharing, and respectful conduct, treaty agreements were the basis of future conduct, reciprocity, and respect between nations.

When the expression “brother” was used in indigenous political negotiations, the political nations were considered equal, and agreements were analogous to those held between brothers in a kinship group. The expression of brother often extended beyond direct biological brothers, but was an expression of care, responsibility, and respect between family members, clan members, or more broadly kin. The expression of “father” in treaty negotiations required commitments of obligation, responsibility and well-being of the father for his children. Many indigenous nations are matrilineal, and fathers are loved, but are not disciplinarians for their blood children. The European expression for father reflected their own patrilineal kinship system, and the father was disciplinarian and holder of power and responsibility for well-being. Either way, the father had the responsibility of providing for the well being of their children.

Indigenous Peoples also extended expressions of nation and kinship to all beings in their cosmological understandings of the universe. Nations of beings, including human nations, were all interconnected and were relatives within the give and take of the cosmological order and purpose. Contemporary modern nation states are built on different theories and cosmologies. To a large extent, treaties were real estate agreements. Trust responsibility was reduced to holding land under federal protection. Treaties outlined the transfer of goods, services, and money to Indian nations, but were seen by the nation state in a largely contractual basis.

In recent years, diplomats at the United Nations are supporting the future development of culturally pluralist nation states. The recognition of different cultures within democratic nation states would go a long way to ameliorate cultural conflict. The expectation of this position is that nation states will become more cultural plural and democratized when capable of incorporating the rights and views of the multiple cultures present in most contemporary nation states. Indigenous Peoples also call for more cultural plural nation states through their actions and political discussions.

Indigenous Peoples prefer their own political organization and consensus political processes. The Andrés Accords from 1996 suggested that: “The various levels of government and state institutions will not intervene unilaterally in the affairs and decisions of the indigenous towns and communities, in their organizational forms of representation, and in their current strategies for the use of resources.”

In the contemporary world, both indigenous and nation-states prefer a more culturally democratized form of government. Nation states invite indigenous nations to uphold their cultures within the political processes of the nation state. Indigenous Peoples, however, continue to insist that government and political processes rely upon negotiated agreement, and consent from Indigenous communities. An indigenous pluralist nation state is one built on mutual respect, for differences not only in culture, but also community, economic strategies, kinship, and for negotiated consensus decision making that provides political incorporation and power to decentralized communities. Indigenous Peoples and nation states continue to disagree on the fundamental rules of government.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/12/05/rules-government-indigenous-peoples-and-nation-states-disagree-162525>

Hawaii's TMT: Did indigenous rights just beat astronomical discovery?

The controversial Thirty Meter Telescope on the Mauna Kea mountain Native Hawaiians consider sacred has had its construction permit rescinded over a technicality.

By [Lucy Schouten, Staff](#) December 5, 2015



A Hawaiian Supreme Court ruling Wednesday on a contentious proposal to build a large, Thirty Meter Telescope atop Mauna Kea validated the rights of indigenous Hawaiians.

The court ruled that the state of Hawaii should not have given the telescope project a permit without formally hearing the position of the Native Hawaiians – who hold the Mauna Kea mountaintop sacred – first. This ruling emphasized that the state must value concerns from the indigenous people who brought the lawsuit and who slowed and prevented work on the telescope for months when they protested by camping on the mountain.

Officials behind the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) wrote on Twitter that the Hawaii Supreme Court [ruled against the state's process](#), not against the telescope project.

The international telescope consortium, led by universities in California and Hawaii, insists it has made every effort to accommodate cultural and environmental concerns from Hawaiians, including [selecting a site](#) without any endangered plants or wildlife, archaeological sites, or shrines.

Mauna Kea, already the site of other telescopes smaller than the proposed project, is the best in the world for astronomy, according to TMT's website.

"It's been said that the 'best night' at other telescope locations is just an 'average' night on Maunakea. And the "best nights" on Maunakea cannot be found anywhere in the world."

The opposition TMT has faced from Native Hawaiians is neither precisely religious nor entirely geographic. Kealoha Pisciotto, a spokeswoman for the group called Mauna Kea Hui that sued Thirty Meter Telescope, [rejected media characterizations of the case](#) as a conflict between religion and science, reported Dennis Overbye for The New York Times.

"This is a very simple case about land use," she told The New York Times. "It's not science versus religion. We're not the church. You're not Galileo."

One of the Native Hawaiian leaders Lanakila Mangauil, who has [used Facebook pages to call for protests](#) during the debate, posted a similar statement [disagreeing with the idea](#) that Native Hawaiians' claims are overtly religious.

"Look at the ruling itself," he wrote. "It wasn't the SPIRITUAL, or even the environmental legalities that stopped this. It was the fact that due process was not followed."

The court ruling does not prevent Thirty Meter Telescope from trying again, though the company, which partnered with California Institute of Technology, the University of California, and the [University of Hawaii](#), has not yet said whether it will. The company could begin the permit process once more, and the state would presumably hold a hearing. The native Hawaiians who hold the mountaintop sacred say they are ready for any future efforts to build there.

A similar conflict 10 years ago – of scientific discovery versus indigenous rights – was a loss for astronomers in Hawaii. Numerous lawsuits led to a rescinded permit to build outriggers on another telescope on Mauna Kea, The New York Times reported.

On the same day that the Hawaiian High Court ruled on the TMT, the US Supreme Court [granted a stay](#) in another case involving indigenous rights in Hawaii, reported Timothy Hurley for the Honolulu Star Advertiser. The order stops an organization given power by the state of Hawaii to elect delegates to a council on Native Hawaiian self-governance from certifying election winners. The order is pending a ruling by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in the next issue of indigenous rights for Hawaii – that is, whether the "[race-based election](#)" is constitutional.

Direct Link: <http://www.csmonitor.com/Science/2015/1205/Hawaii-s-TMT-Did-indigenous-rights-just-beat-astronomical-discovery>

Former Colorado politician Nighthorse Campbell leads effort to honor Native American veterans

By Edward Graham
Herald Staff Writer

Article Last Updated: Saturday, December 05, 2015 5:04pm



The National Museum of the American Indian building is seen, where a Native American Veterans Memorial will be constructed.

WASHINGTON D.C. – Ben Nighthorse Campbell – Korean War veteran, Olympic athlete and former Colorado politician – is honoring the service of his fellow Native American military veterans by helping to oversee the creation of a national memorial in their honor.



Campbell

In 2013, Congress passed legislation approving the development of a Native American Veterans Memorial on the site of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. Efforts are now underway to make that legislative goal a reality.

Campbell, who served three terms in the House of Representatives and two terms in the U.S. Senate, was named, along with Chickasaw Nation Lt. Gov. Jefferson Keel, as co-chairman of the advisory committee overseeing the memorial's construction earlier this year.

"I think, from our standpoint, the point of the memorial is twofold," Campbell said during an interview Thursday with The Durango Herald. "To give our Native American youth an awareness of the importance of Native Americans in defending this country, and secondly, to give the public at large who do not know much about them more information."

Campbell said the process will likely take about five years, as advisory committee and museum leaders work with veterans and tribes to develop a theme, design and the necessary funding to construct the memorial. The goal is to raise at least \$10 million.

"The only parameters outlined right now are that it needs to be built on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian, and since they have limited land space, they'll have to have something designed that fits into that existing piece of land," Campbell said, adding that the committee is hoping to get as much input and feedback from veterans as possible in order to better share their experiences.

Back when he was still a member of the House of Representatives in 1989, Campbell introduced the authorizing legislation to establish the National Museum of the American Indian. Through his efforts in the House, as well as through the efforts of former Sen. Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, the museum was officially opened 10 years later.

Campbell, who served as an air policeman in the Korean War and left the service in 1953 with the rank of Airman Second Class, said the veterans' memorial would allow visitors to the museum better recognize the contributions and military service of all Native Americans throughout history.

"The first thing that usually comes to mind is the Navajo code talkers," Campbell said. "But in fact, there were 16 tribes that had code talkers. Most people don't have any idea who they were. But they were Choctaw and Chickasaw and Lakota Sioux and Apache, and many other tribes had code talkers. They just didn't get the recognition that the Navajo did. And the Navajo certainly deserved it, too, but many others also deserve recognition for their experience in World War II."

And the contributions of Native Americans in the military aren't just limited to previous wars. Campbell said that about 1.1 percent of all Americans today are of Native American ancestry, but that 1.7 percent of active personnel in the military are Native American.

"We have a bigger proportion of Native Americans in the United States military than any other group in America," Campbell said.

Although the process is just beginning, Campbell said he would like to see the memorial tell those personal stories of military service that have led thousands of Native Americans to join the armed forces. Throughout 2016, the advisory committee will begin the process of meeting with veterans to compile their stories of service to better shape the construction process moving forward.

“Now we’re beginning to take input from tribes and any Native American who would like to offer suggestions, but we’re particularly interested in the experiences of veterans,” Campbell said.

Direct Link:

<http://www.durangoherald.com/article/20151205/NEWS01/151209727/Former-Colorado-politician-Nighthorse-Campbell-leads-effort-to-honor-Native-American-veterans>

Bison vital to Native Americans

Posted: Sunday, December 6, 2015 12:01 am

By Dan Lee

(Editor's note: This is the second in an occasional series on threatened and endangered species.)

Editor's note: This is the second in an occasional series on threatened and endangered species.

Though just about everyone refers to them as “buffalo,” they are only remotely related to the water buffalo of Southeast Asia and other true buffalo.

It is more accurate to refer to them as “bison,” or, somewhat more formally, by their scientific name, *Bison bison*.

Bison were the source of sustenance and just about everything else needed by the Native American tribes living on the Great Plains in what is now the United States and on the prairies of what is now Canada -- tribes that included the Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Comanche, Crow, Lakota and many others.

Bison meat, which was dried and saved for winter use, often combined with fat and berries to form pemmican, comprised a major portion of their diets.

Bison hides stretched over poles tied together near the top formed the tipis which protected them from inclement weather.

The hides also were the source of leather for the clothing they wore and the moccasins that protected their feet. Bison robes kept them warm in winter and were the bedding in their tipis on which they slept.

Bison sinews provided the strings for their bows and the thread they used when making their clothing. Bison bones were formed into tools and other useful items.

Prior to acquiring horses in the mid-1700s, Native Americans hunted on foot, trying to get close enough to bison and other game animals to bring them down with a well-placed arrow or the thrust of a spear.

It was an endeavor fraught with danger. A bison that was not brought down could -- and often did -- charge the hunter.

Though also fraught with danger, plains tribes developed other techniques for harvesting the bison they needed to sustain their way of life.

Bison jumps were one of the most effective of these techniques. The location had to be carefully chosen. It needed to be near a grassy area where bison would be grazing and close to a cliff over which stampeding bison could be driven. And it needed to be near a river or some other source of water for processing the carcasses once the bison had been driven over the cliff.

While there were minor variations from site to site and from tribe to tribe, the basics were essentially the same. Cairns of piled stones, with brush often spread between them, would form drive lines designed to channel the bison toward the jump -- drive lines that in some cases were more than a mile long.

The ahwa waki (buffalo runner) played a key role. Dressed in a robe made of the skin of a calf and often wearing a cap with bison ears and horns, the ahwa waki would position himself ahead of the herd to lure them in the direction of the jump.

Capt. Meriwether Lewis, who came across a jump site by the Missouri River while on his journey of discovery with 2nd. Lt. William Clark and a select group of volunteers, tells the rest of the story (his original spelling has been kept in the quotation):

“[T]he disguised indian or decoy has taken care to place himself sufficiently nigh the buffaloe to be noticed by them when they take to flight and runing before them they follow him in full speede to the precipice, the cattle behind driving those in front over and seeing them go do not look or hesitate about following untill the whole are precipitated down the precepice forming one common mass of dead an[d] mangled carcasses: the decoy in the mean time has taken care to secure himself in some cranney or crivice of the clift which he had previously prepared for that purpose.”

Lewis, in somewhat of an understatement, added that “the part of the decoy I am informed is extreemly dangerous, if they are not very fleet runners the buffaloe tread them

under foot and crush them to death, and sometimes drive them over the precipice also, where they perish in common with the buffalo.”

Though Native Americans occasionally killed more bison than they could use (they couldn’t always control the size of herd that was driven over the precipice) they did not kill so many that the survival of the species was threatened.

That was to come later when European Americans massacred bison in massive numbers. The story of how this happened will be the topic of a subsequent column.

Daniel E. Lee is the Marian Taft Cannon Professor in the Humanities at Augustana College; danlee@augustana.edu.

Direct Link: http://www.qconline.com/opinion/columnists/dan_lee/bison-vital-to-native-americans/article_36765d63-b2d1-57d7-a62d-6ed62c15d63e.html

Indian law faces challenge as sex assault case heads to high court

Posted: Saturday, December 5, 2015 7:00 pm | *Updated: 8:11 pm, Sat Dec 5, 2015.*

By Anne Constable
The New Mexican

New Mexico tribal leaders say the decision in a long-running Indian law case that will be heard Monday by the U.S. Supreme Court could impair their ability to govern themselves.

“It’s sad. It’s a direct attack on tribal sovereignty and Native American rights, and it’s plain wrong,” said Joe Talachy, governor of Pojoaque Pueblo.

He was referring to the case involving Dollar General Corp., a multibillion-dollar business with 12,396 stores in the United States, and the federally recognized Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. At issue is whether tribal courts can exercise civil jurisdiction over non-Indians for wrongs committed on their lands.

In 2000, Dollar General opened a store on land leased from a tribally owned company. Three years later, the store manager allegedly sexually assaulted a 13-year-old tribal member who was in a job-training program. When the U.S. attorney declined to pursue a criminal case, the teen sued Dollar General and the employee in tribal court for \$2.5 million. The company contested the tribal court’s jurisdiction all the way to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, losing each time.

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed in June to hear an appeal of the rulings, raising fear among the tribes that it was looking to make a broad decision that could further restrict tribal authority. And, tribal advocates say, the court's decisions overall under Chief Justice John Roberts have not been particularly friendly to Native Americans.

Santa Fe lawyer Bryant Rogers, who represented the Choctaw tribe in this case, and many others will be handing off the oral arguments to Neal Katyal, a former acting solicitor general of the United States who has argued 25 cases before the Supreme Court. Rogers will be on hand for the arguments.

The case involving Dollar General comes after years of efforts by tribes to hold onto their authority over non-Indians.

In 1978, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that tribal courts do not have power over non-Indians in criminal matters, although Congress said in 2013 that tribes can have special jurisdiction over non-Indians who commit domestic violence in Indian Country.

Another U.S. Supreme Court case in 1981 said tribal sovereignty includes the power to use "some forms of civil jurisdiction over non-Indians on their reservation," such as those that arise from contracts and leases or cases in which Congress has specifically consented.

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians maintains that current case law doesn't require specific consent to tribal jurisdiction and that there is implied consent because of the relationship between the store and the assault.

Dollar General believes that express consent to tribal jurisdiction is required, and in September, it was joined by six states, including Oklahoma, that argued in a friend-of-the-court brief that there were too many uncertainties in tribal courts for non-Native defendants to get a fair trial.

The brief said many tribes don't have a fully written code for a court system.

But Edward Gehres, who heads a tribal business legal practice in Washington, D.C., said the Choctaw courts are relatively sophisticated and able to handle cases such as this one. Moreover, the federal government, which is supporting the tribes in the Dollar General case, has been a fairly strong supporter of the growth of tribal courts in recent years. There is even a tribal lawyers association, which held its first conference last month in Michigan.

Tribes are worried about how the Supreme Court's ruling on jurisdiction in this case could impact all sorts of issues on their lands — from toxic waste dumping and destruction of cultural property to marijuana grows and meth labs. The ruling also could affect unauthorized grazing, hunting and fishing, and illegal tree cutting.

“Tribes have a way to deal with it. The feds are not going to do it. The state is not going to do it,” Gehres said.

He pointed to a recent case in which a non-Indian woman was sued in tribal court for damages from a forest fire she started accidentally in Arizona when her car broke down and she got lost. The U.S. attorney refused to prosecute the case.

The National Congress of the American Indian said in a court brief in the Dollar General case that in many instances, “Non members go unpunished more often than not. Simply put, non-Indian criminals believe they can act with impunity on Indian lands.”

The brief said the express consent standard for tribal civil jurisdiction over nonmembers “would depart radically from current standards established by this court’s jurisprudence and is, quite simply, unworkable.”

Jurisdiction in cases like this one is “most critical to a tribe’s ability to self govern its own people, territories and resources,” the brief stated.

Talachy said the issue of non-Indian offenders avoiding consequences for crimes on tribal lands is a common problem in New Mexico. If the tribes have no recourse against non-Native offenders, they will not be prosecuted, and “the federal government rarely has the resources,” he said. “It’s only fair we get to do that. Otherwise, we have offenders walking around with nothing against them. It’s been proven in Indian Country.”

He said he could think of three serious crimes recently on tribal land, including rape, in which the U.S. attorney declined to prosecute. “Historically, Native Americans were oppressed and raped, and it’s still happening today. It’s plain wrong. If we lose, we lose all recourse and especially our ability to protect our women. It would be a complete disaster.”

But there’s also downside to an all-out tribal win, Talachy pointed out. His tribe, like many, does business with big companies such as McDonald’s, Dairy Queen and other vendors who lease space from them. But in the future, if the court says the tribes have jurisdiction over non-Indians in tort claims, those interests might be reluctant to do business with them.

“This Dollar General case is going to turn bad for Indian Country either way,” Talachy said.

Lawyers watching the case closely believe that a broad ruling is more likely if Dollar General wins. But a win for the tribe is likely to be more narrow, meaning tribes’ civil jurisdiction would continue to be tested.

“The stakes for the tribe and frankly for all of Indian Country are the future of its judiciary to have power over certain actions of non-Indians within the boundaries of the reservation,” Gehres said.

The Supreme Court's decision is expected next year.

Direct Link: http://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/indian-law-faces-challenge-as-sex-assault-case-heads-to/article_bd758678-b23c-576d-885d-39c7b3d9c93d.html

Indigenous Leaders In Paris Issue Declaration Calling For The End Of Fossil Fuel Extraction

by [Natasha Geiling](#) Dec 6, 2015 12:33 pm



PARIS, FRANCE — The sound of drums and chanting rang across the *Bassin de la Villette* — Paris' largest artificial lake — on Sunday as representatives from indigenous tribes stretching from the Arctic to the Amazon demonstrated against the extraction of fossil fuels and the omission of indigenous' rights from an international climate treaty. A group of about 25 activists gathered in canoes and kayaks on the lake, displaying flags emblazoned with traditional symbols, while others joined from above, hanging banners off of a nearby bridge.

Following the demonstration on the water, six indigenous leaders spoke about their desires for a climate agreement that respects their territorial rights and traditional lands. Together, the leaders released three declarations: one signifying the creation of a coalition between all indigenous women of America, one asking that sacred Amazon forests be legally protected, and one asking for an end of fossil fuel extraction and subsidies.



“We are here to call upon the governments of the world that they must respect the rights of Indigenous peoples,” Faith Gimmel-Fredson, executive director of REDOIL and a member of the Neets’aii Gwich’in people, said during a press conference. “No more false solutions. We don’t have time.”

Indigenous peoples, who are often still dependent on the land for subsistence and cultural traditions, are some of the first communities to feel the full force of climate changes. In the Arctic, the Gwich’in people, who depend on the Porcupine caribou herds that migrate from the Alaska’s coastal plains down into Alaska and Canada, have seen their [food security threatened](#) as changing climate impacts the caribou’s migration patterns.

“Alaska is ground zero of climate change,” Gimmel-Fredson said. “The ground we walk on is literally melting beneath us.”

In addition to climate change, fossil fuel companies looking to launch exploratory drilling in the Arctic also threaten the Gwich’in peoples’ food security and traditional way of life. Alaskan politicians, including [Gov. Bill Walker \(I\)](#) and Sen. [Lisa Murkowski \(R\)](#), have consistently called for the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge — a crucial birthing ground for Porcupine caribou and a sacred place for the Gwich’in people — to be opened to oil and gas exploration.

“We kicked Shell out of the Arctic,” Gimmel-Fredson said, but noted that her people still face the “assault of our traditional territories by the fossil fuel extractive industry.”



Despite their proximity to the consequences of climate change, indigenous communities have had to battle simply to be included in the international climate agreement that is expected to come out of the Paris talks next week. As late in the talks as Thursday — two days before the draft of a climate deal was sent to ministers to use as basis for upcoming negotiations — it seemed as if any mention of indigenous communities and indigenous rights [might not make it into the agreement](#). As of Saturday, it appears as though references to indigenous rights have been [reinserted](#) into the text.

“It is key that we are here as indigenous communities because we are the frontline communities,” Dallas Goldtooth, of the Mdewakanton Dakota and Diné peoples, said. “Our relationship to Mother Earth is being impacted, and our way to live our lives is being destroyed.”

The Keep It In The Ground Declaration garnered support from over 150 leaders in the environmental and justice communities, with organizations like 350.org, Center for International Environmental Law, Food & Water Watch, and Friends of the Earth backing the declaration.



Casey Camp-Horinek, an environmental and native rights activist from the Ponca Nation of Oklahoma, spoke of the changes she has seen as [hydraulic fracturing](#) has boomed across the state. Since 2009, Oklahoma has seen an intense spike in earthquakes, becoming the most [seismically active state](#) in the lower 48 in 2014.

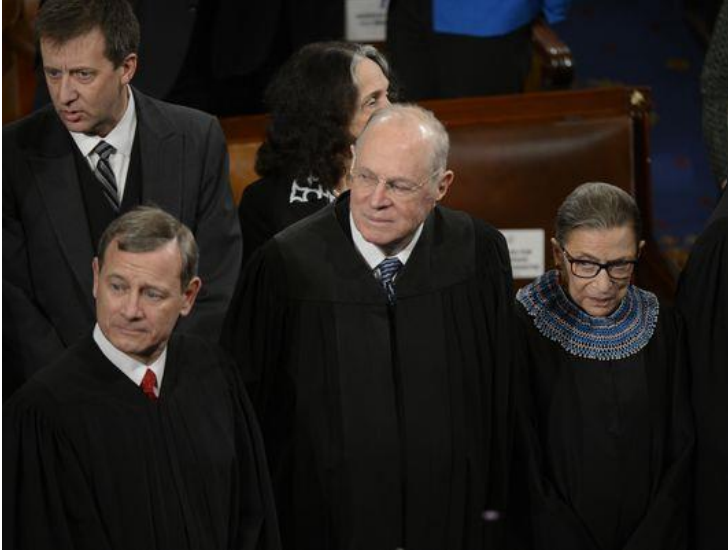
She likened the spread of fracking throughout Oklahoma to the original “environmental genocide,” caused by European settlers bringing smallpox and colonizing indigenous peoples’ land.

“Now, they come with refineries, with fracking, and with pipelines,” she said. “They kill the air, they kill the Earth, they kill the water.”

Direct Link: <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2015/12/06/3728851/indigenous-leaders-paris-rally/>

Supreme Court appears likely to limit reach of Native American courts

[Richard Wolf](#), USA TODAY 2:51 p.m. EST December 7, 2015



WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court appeared unlikely Monday to let an American Indian tribal court handle a sexual molestation lawsuit against a local businessman who is not a member of the tribe.

In a case dating back to 2003, the high court's conservative majority challenged lawyers for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, who want the family of a boy who claims he was sexually molested to get its day in tribal court. The federal government is siding with the tribe.

Justice Anthony Kennedy said the Constitution gives Americans the right to be tried in a neutral court — which in this case would mean to have it moved to a state court. "The people have a right to insist on the Constitution, even if Mississippi or the federal government doesn't care," he said.

"There has never been a case where a non-member has been held liable in tort in an Indian court," Chief Justice John Roberts said.

The case is important for the nation's more than 300 Indian tribes, who want to attract business and commerce to their lands while retaining regulatory and judicial authority if laws are broken or contracts breached.

In this case, an employee of Dollar General was accused of molesting a 13-year-old boy participating in a youth opportunity program at the store he managed on tribal land. The boy's family is seeking at least \$2.5 million in damages.

The court's more liberal members appeared sympathetic to the tribe. "What's wrong with the tribal courts?" Justice Stephen Breyer asked the lawyer for Dollar General, Thomas Goldstein. Rather than avoid trial there altogether, Breyer said, defendants can "go and complain, 'We didn't get due process of law.'"

"You're just assuming that these judges are not neutral," Justice Sonia Sotomayor said.

Neal Katyal, the lawyer representing the Choctaw tribe, said Dollar General consented to be governed by tribal law at the outset — though not, Goldstein said, by a tribal court.

"They knew they were coming on to tribal lands and subjecting themselves to tribal law," Katyal said. "When you're on tribal lands, the tribe's powers are at their zenith."

Direct Link: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/12/07/supreme-court-mississippi-dollar-general-tribe-lawsuit/76931690/>

Textbook Aims to Revolutionize Nursing Care for Native Americans

[Tanya H. Lee](#)

12/7/15

Margaret P. Moss, a member of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation, is a nurse, a doctor, an attorney and a writer who has combined her skills to compile the first nursing textbook on American Indian health.

She and twelve contributing authors guide readers through the implications for nursing care of nine distinct Native cultures. She describes how disparities in health care policy, as well as environmental, historical and geographic conditions have led to poor health for so many American Indian and Alaska Native people. [Springer Publishing Company](#) has scheduled publication of *American Indian Health and Nursing* for December.

Moss says she learned cultural competence on the job because no formal material on American Indian health and nursing was available. She has made it her mission to teach her nursing students what she had to discover on her own. In this textbook, she shares that information with a wider audience of medical students and professionals and with anyone who has an interest in American history, current American Indian issues and health and healthcare.



Margaret P. Moss has compiled the first textbook on American Indian nursing, scheduled for publication this month.

Moss talked with ICTMN about health care in Indian country.

Could you talk about how a lack of cultural competence among health care providers contributes to health disparities in American Indian and Alaska Native populations? What are some of the characteristics of cultural competence?

[Cultural competence](#) is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, an agency or among professionals that enable that system or agency or those professions to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

[In the health care industry] there are many historical, political and geographic realities for American Indians that feed into the social and structural determinants of health that are largely “unseen” by non-Natives, who want to know, “Why can’t American Indians just become healthier?” And that is if they know the health circumstance of Natives at all!

We now know that due to historical trauma—unresolved grief—epigenetic changes absolutely do occur, changing today’s American Indian people’s physical, mental, emotional and spiritual responses to the circumstances they find themselves in.

If the health care provider and the health care system do not recognize how past atrocities and current circumstances manifest into today’s health picture for American Indians, then it will be hard to change the incidence of disease and mortality.

If people are pushed out to unfarmable land, if they are 100 miles from the nearest “real” grocery store, if they must travel hours to the closest IHS hospital, how would anyone do? Throw in no money, less education and fewer income opportunities, hopelessness, rampant methamphetamine use and alcohol abuse. If [you were a nurse and] this was your patient’s reality, would you just give normal diabetic education and discharge instructions?

Another example—as nurses we learn most about physical issues that require our intervention, although as nurses we also embrace a holistic view of the person. So we should recognize mental and spiritual aspects [of illness] as well.

Elderly, traditional American Indians, for example, have a similar view of the person as nurses do, but probably in reverse order. Spiritual life is first [in importance] and physical [condition] last. Unless you know this, you may not be planning care in a culturally competent way. If you are pushing your Western, one-size-fits-all plan of care you will not be optimizing the health of the person in front of you.

The other problem is that [as a nurse] you often don't KNOW who is in front of you, especially in urban areas. Misidentification is a huge problem in providing culturally competent care and implementing the Affordable Care Act's mandates for patient-centered care. No one ever asks... people usually don't expect to "see" an American Indian in their clinic. And if they do, they may not know, unless they ask.

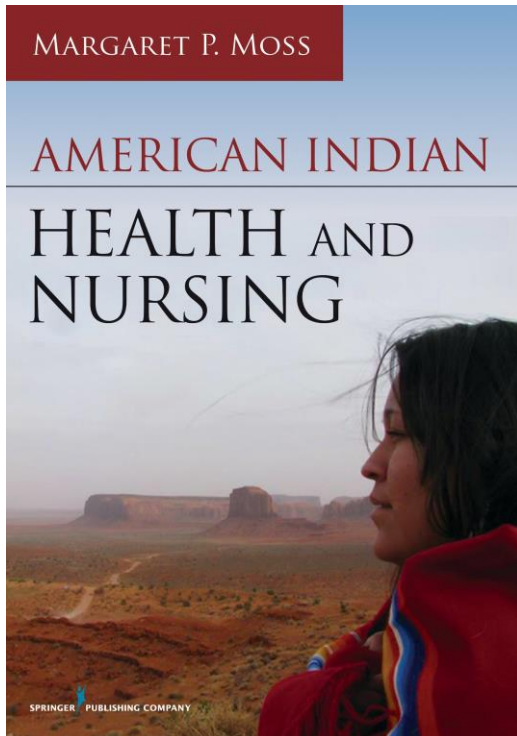
What are some of the things that could be done to increase the number of AI/AN practitioners in the nursing profession? Is that important?

It is critical that we increase the number of American Indian nurses. When the nurse is an American Indian, there is shared history and understandings with the American Indian patient, whether on the reservation or in urban settings. They are experts in the culture and the experience and they can bring that expertise to the profession. Insight into patient care will increase and the discordance between American Indian patients and [health care] providers will lessen.

What are some of the unique factors nurses must understand in order to treat Indians in urban settings effectively?

Urban identity is a heterogeneous mix. People [went to the cities via] military service, education and employment routes. They also got there in the mid 1950s because of Indian relocation programs that promised housing and jobs to Indians if they moved to cities, with the goal of assimilation. The housing and jobs were rarely as promised, if they existed at all.

Intertribal identities come to the fore in urban areas in contrast to the mostly singular tribal identities "back home." Therefore, when [city dwellers] return to their reservations reintegration may be an issue. The two worse case scenarios are the highly visible homeless American Indian in the cities and the invisible American Indian on the reservations. Either bookend of this experience is destructive. Again, correct identification is one of the biggest services nurses in cities can provide.



Margaret P. Moss has compiled the first textbook on American Indian nursing, scheduled for publication this month.

Moss holds a Ph.D. in nursing from the University of Texas-Houston and a doctorate of law from the Hamline University School of Law. She began her career as an inpatient clinical nurse and patient educator in 1991 when she took a position at the Indian Health Service's Santa Fe Indian Hospital. In 1999, she was awarded a National Institutes of Health grant for her dissertation on the Zuni Pueblo, in which she explored why elders would not seek eldercare and found the answers deeply rooted in tradition, culture, medicine and religion.

She has taught and pursued her research interests at the Yale School of Nursing, McGill University, the University of Minnesota, and as director and principal investigator of the Native Nurse Career Opportunity Program and as faculty on the NIH Bridge to the Ph.D. program at the University of New Mexico. Currently she is Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion and an associate professor at the State University of New York–Buffalo, School of Nursing.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/12/07/textbook-aims-revolutionize-nursing-care-native-americans-162597>

Trail trees are a living Native American legacy

These ancient navigational tools still exist, but they can be tough to find.

By: [Laura Moss](#)

December 8, 2015, 11:22 a.m.



Trail trees still point in the direction they were bent in hundreds of years ago. (Photo: [Eddie Lanham](#)/Historical Exploration/Brooks, GA)

If you've ever encountered a bent tree while [hiking](#) in North American woods, you may have simply happened upon a tree that was bowed by weather, disease or other natural causes. However, you might have stumbled upon an ancient trail marker created by Native Americans hundreds of years ago.

Known as trail trees, these markers were used to designate trails, crossing points on streams, medicinal sites to find plants, and areas of significance like council circles.

"[Native Americans] were very smart and very close to the Earth," Don Wells, who helps map these trees as part of the [Trail Tree Project](#), told [Indian Country Today Media Network](#). "They could name every plant and know what they could use it for. They knew the trees and could use them to their benefit."

Centuries ago, these bent trees could be found across the United States, allowing [Native Americans](#) to navigate easily across vast distances. While many of these trees remain today, the gaps between them are becoming wider as land is developed, and those that have endured can be difficult to find, as their locations are kept secret to protect them.

How were trail trees created?

When making a trail marker, a Native American would look for a sapling with a trunk about three-fourths of an inch in diameter. The sapling would be bent in the direction that should be followed and then secured in that position by one of several methods.

Sometimes the saplings would be tied down with rawhide, [bark](#) or vines, but other times the tiny trees would be weighted down by a rock or a pile of dirt. Once secured, the

sapling would be left in this bent shape for a year to lock it in position, at which point, even after it was released, it would continue to grow pointing in the intended direction.

While not every tree along a route was bowed, bending hardwood trees at intervals created a continuous route of travel with markers that could be easily distinguished from the surrounding forest.

If there were no available saplings to bend, the lowermost branch of a large tree would be bent to guide travelers, and if the trail entered a non-wooded area, another system of marking had to be used, such as [piling stones](#). However, the use of living trees was the most permanent, and therefore the most often used method, to mark trails.

How did this affect the trees?

While being forced into an unnatural position didn't kill the trees, it did affect their development.

Having been bent toward the ground, these trees would typically establish a secondary trunk that grew upward and developed branches and leaves. In most cases, the branches of the original trunk would decay and fall off, leaving the original trunk bare.

However, sometimes the bent tree trunk would come in contact with the ground and the tree would develop a second set of roots.

Despite being [manipulated by man](#), the trees would continue to grow, expanding in diameter as they pointed in the direction of the path one should take. To this day, remaining trail trees still point in the same direction they were bent hundreds of years ago.



Years later, this trail tree has a distinctive shape. (Photo: [Eddie Lanham](#)/Historical Exploration/Brooks, Georgia)

How can you tell the difference between a trail tree and a naturally deformed tree?

Trees with a bent or bowed shape aren't rare. Animal depredations could have caused trees to be misshapen, as could weather like wind, [lightning](#), ice and snow.

Falling objects can also pin down a tree, causing it to grow sideways and appear similar to a trail tree. But when this occurs, typically the bend is longer and more subtle, unlike the more clear angle created when man alters a tree's growing direction.

To the untrained eye, differentiating between a trail tree and one that's naturally deformed can be difficult — sometimes even for experts.

"The ideal way is to core the tree — find out the age of the tree to determine if it would have been there around the time of the Indians," said Wells. "But we can't go all over the country coring trees. Second way is to look for artifacts around the area. We collect as much information as we can, then make the best judgment call."

Wells, in collaboration with several groups, documents trail trees across the country and maintains their location in the [National Trail Trees database](#). The database includes more than 2,000 trees in 40 U.S. states.

How can you find a trail tree?

Because trail trees aren't protected by law, the people who [map](#) them and study them keep their locations under wraps. The National Trail Trees database is confidential, and while the Trail Tree Project's website features a map of where these trees have been found, it won't exactly get you to the tree you want to see.

"All you know is that tree is somewhere within 1,000 square miles in a certain state," Wells said. "You will never be able to find it from the information that we show."

To make your odds of seeing a trail tree better, experts recommend hiking in areas where land is less likely to have been disturbed, such as national forest lands, which have long been protected, or mountain community areas that haven't undergone a lot of development.

Direct Link: <http://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/wilderness-resources/stories/trail-trees-living-native-american-legacy>

These comics put Native American stories at the front and center

BY [Rocky Mountain PBS](#) December 8, 2015 at 12:50 PM EST
Video produced by Carrie Saldo.

Native American comics are working to bring fresh attention to Native cultures and people in a country where many people have limited or inaccurate knowledge about them.

Arigon Starr launched “Super Indian,” as a webcomic in April 2011. The comic’s tagline is “Once a Rez boy... now a super hero!”

Starr said the work can help counter mainstream views of Native cultures that see them as belonging to the past. “We’re considered by many [to be] defeated, extinct, nonexistent, invisible,” she said.

Lee Francis IV, head of the Indigenous Narrative Collective, said this is a misconception that is often introduced in U.S. classrooms. “Native folks are very historicized,” he said. “There’s a period that we study in history where it’s Native folks all the way through, and then they stop being mentioned, as if we cease to exist.”

In many cases, characters with a Native background are described as half Anglo, and their Native heritage functions only as a device in the story — which also does disservice to that history, Francis said. Those stories become more of a “caricature than an actual exploration of Native identity and what that means,” he said.

Native comic book artists can counter those stereotypes by bringing Native protagonists to the center of contemporary stories, increasing representation and providing role models for young Native people, Starr said. “My goal, ultimately, is to have Native kids come to these [conventions] dressed as Super Indian,” she said.

[Local Beat](#) is an ongoing series on [Art Beat](#) that features arts and culture stories from PBS member stations around the nation.

Direct Link: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/art/native-comics-super-indian/>

School board hears comment on mascot issue

Elected officials mum; fans of Native American mascots only ones to speak



(Photo Mike Hensdill/The Gaston Gazette) South Point hosted East Gaston High School in a football game Monday, Sept. 28 and fans of both teams filled the stands. Here, East Gaston fans cheer on their team.

December 08. 2015 10:10AM

They want their schools' Native American mascots to stay put.

That's what two Gaston residents told the county's public school board during its regular meeting Monday. They voiced their concerns after the school board was recently asked by a Charlotte man to discontinue the South Point Red Raiders and East Gaston Warriors mascots.

"I've known what's going on in this area my entire life, and I really don't want the mascots to change," said Ronald Muse, a 1988 graduate of East Gaston High. "I was proud to go to East Gaston to be a Warrior. It speaks well of who I am and what I've become."

Muse also said his grandfather was part Cherokee and that he was never offended by the school's mascot.

Shawn Greeson, who says he has Native American ancestry, recently told board members in an email the mascots were racist and offensive to Native Americans. Greeson has not addressed the school board in a public meeting.

East Gaston class of 1990 alumna Carmen Starnes resents the claims of racism. She posted an online petition on Thanksgiving Day asking the school board to keep the mascots at both schools. The petition received more than 2,200 signatures from past and present students. She addressed the school board Monday.

"(Greeson) has claimed that some of the students who are Native American feel unsafe attending these schools," said Starnes. "I know people who work in the school system, in the administration and teachers and even my family... they've never heard of this happening."

Greeson was elected last year to serve a four-year term on the Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors in Mecklenburg County. His term ends in 2018. He recently ended his campaign for an at-large seat on Charlotte City Council.

"This guy wants some political gain and he's using Gaston County and our schools to do this," said Starnes.

Greeson recently said he will have a reduced role going forward in his request to change the mascots. He forwarded a request for comment to Terry Creech, who says he is a member and former board member of the Metrolina Native American Association and member of the Cohaire tribe of North Carolina.

In an email to The Gazette, Creech called it immoral and wrong to paint one's face and to dress up as Native Americans, as some fans do at South Point and East Gaston sporting events. Creech says the head dresses and other forms of regalia worn to represent the

sports teams and schools are only used by Native Americans for religious purposes and ceremonies.

“In all, there are a very large group of people who are not Native American telling Native Americans how we should feel and view the use of our own culture and heritage in regards to how they feel about their schools and communities,” said Creech, in the email.

“Yet they are not recognizing that the culture and traditions that they are clinging to so harshly do not and have never belonged to them. They belong to the people who are asking you to stop using them and have (belonged to Native Americans) for thousands of years.”

The school board did not comment during the public expression portion of the meeting, as is board policy.

Direct Link:

<http://www.gastongazette.com/article/20151208/NEWS/151209203?template=printart>

Nighthorse Campbell Leading Way for Native Veterans Memorial

[ICTMN Staff](#)

12/7/15

The figure is at least copy million and the timeframe about five years. Those are the details Ben Nighthorse Campbell shared recently with the [Durango Herald](#) in discussing the Native American Veterans Memorial.

The Korean War Veteran, Olympic athlete and former Colorado politician, is co-chairman of the advisory committee with Chickasaw Nation Lt. Gov. Jefferson Keel, overseeing the memorial's construction.

The memorial will be built at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.

Campbell says at least copy0 million is needed, but a copy5 million campaign was launched on October 20 at a reception at the National Congress of American Indians' 72nd annual convention as ICTMN reported.

Initial pledges of \$5,000.00 were made by the Tulalip, Puyallup and Mohegan Nations, as well as the National Indian Gaming Association were announced at the reception. There were promises of more to follow.

The original legislation was signed into law with the Native American Veterans Memorial Establishment Act of 1994 but two provisions held up the memorial's creation. The first was the stipulation that the monument could not be outdoors on the National Mall, but had to be within the NMAI. The second was that NMAI was not allowed to raise funds for the monument, instead depended on the efforts of NCAI.

The new legislation written by Congressman Markwayne Mullin (R-Okla.), a Cherokee Nation member, removed those roadblocks on December 26, 2013, when President Barack Obama signed it into law.

"The only parameters outlined right now are that it needs to be built on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian, and since they have limited land space, they'll have to have something designed that fits into that existing piece of land," Campbell told the *Herald*.

Campbell also said the memorial would highlight the contributions and military service of all American Indians throughout history for visitors of the museum in an effort to improve recognition.

The memorial advisory committee has plans to compile stories and details from veterans throughout 2016 to help shape the construction process as the memorial moves forward.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/12/07/nighthorse-campbell-leading-way-native-veterans-memorial-162682>

Washington State's Second Native American-Owned Pot Shop Is a Big Win for Tribal Sovereignty

by [Tobias Coughlin-Bogue](#) • Dec 8, 2015 at 2:58 pm



Budtender Sussan Lee (who is not a member of the Suquamish tribe) at Agate Dreams' grand opening yesterday in Poulsbo. TCB

The state's second Native American-owned pot shop, [Agate Dreams](#), opened yesterday in a nondescript building on the Suquamish reservation. As I drove past a sign for the grave where **Chief Sealth rolls over** every time we say "Seattle," I found myself wondering how big of a deal this really was, given that we've already got [tons of retail pot shops](#) in Washington.

When I got to the store and talked to members of the Suquamish tribe—who are all rightfully jazzed about it—I realized that it's very important. Why? Because it's not just about pot, it's about **tribal sovereignty**, economic development, the war on drugs, job creation, and all sorts of other issues.

A couple tribal members came up with the idea after taking a business management course in which they were tasked with presenting ideas for new tribal business ventures. "Their pitch was recreational marijuana," said Calvin Medina, Agate Dreams' store manager. "That kind of sparked the question of, 'Can we get into this? Or should we?' So we started doing some research."

Enter Rion Ramirez, the general counsel for Port Madison Enterprises, the tribe's economic arm. He was instrumental in doing the research to determine whether the [Cole and Wilkinson memos](#)—the US Department of Justice proclamations on marijuana enforcement in states and on reservations, respectively—would allow the tribe to join the marijuana business, and in working with the state and the tribal council to reach an agreement allowing the tribe's pot shop to operate.

While Ramirez acknowledged that "the tribe would not have legalized marijuana but for Washington state legalizing it," the agreement allows tribes to operate their own marijuana business largely according to their own rules. The main concession to the state is that the tribe charges the same 37 percent marijuana excise tax that everyone else does. They also have their own sales tax of about 8.2 percent, ensuring that their prices don't undercut existing pot retailers. But **all that tax money goes to the tribe**.

That agreement is important because it represents both an economic and political win for the tribe. As Robin Sigo, a member of the Suquamish Tribal Council, put it, "It was something that was possible, it was something that was potentially profitable, and it was **another chance for us to strengthen our sovereignty**." How does reaching an agreement strengthen the tribe's sovereignty? Again, I'll turn it over to Sigo:

It strengthens the **government-to-government relationship** between the tribe and the state government. It basically says, 'You might be the state and you have said that marijuana is legal here, but we're not going to apply as a business and get a business license from the state.' That wouldn't make any sense for us. We worked to negotiate a compact with the state that was an official government-to-government relationship, and to look at making sure we got to keep the tax revenue because we're operating [marijuana businesses] here and the tax revenue should come to us. It's more money that goes into essential government services for us. It took two years to get to this point, and the fact that we're here at this point is **amazing**. We've gotten to take a stand for other tribes in

the state and country. As it gets legalized in more and more states, more and more tribes are going to be having this opportunity, and we're glad to lead.

Medina echoed those sentiments, saying, "We want to prove to the state and to the rest of the country that we can run this just as well as every other operation. We're not trying to get around any particular rules or regulations. We just want to compete like everyone else. If the first two tribes in the country that pull this off do this wrong, that means the other **574 tribes** in the country aren't gonna have a shot at it."

Indeed, their goal was to partner with the state's system, not work around it, Ramirez said. And Medina mentioned that the tribe might choose to grow and export its own cannabis down the line, and that matching the state's regulations and being up to speed on BioTrack—Washington's state-mandated traceability software—would facilitate that.

Prior to the Suquamish's venture into the pot business, it was illegal to possess or consume marijuana on the reservation. Legalizing pot statewide didn't change tribal law, but **attitudes on pot shifted** recently.



Budtender and Suquamish tribal member Francisco Smith. TCB

"The question we usually get asked is, 'How do you guys square it with the fact that you're anti-drug but you're opening a marijuana shop?'" said Sigo. "We did have a number of community meetings about it, and out of the three different community meetings we had I think we only had two people who said, 'No, absolutely not, don't do it, it's a gateway drug.' We kind of used that opportunity to talk about the myth of the gateway drug. **The idea that it's a gateway drug is not accurate.** A lot of elders came out in support of it. A lot of them have personal friends or family who've used it medicinally, and it's worked really well." The council passed an ordinance legalizing marijuana unanimously.

The pot shop, in addition to creating 10 to 12 new full-time jobs with full benefits, also continues a tradition of funding robust government services via business enterprise. “Our tribe has done really well having things like the casino and the gas stations,” Sigo said. “Those kind of things have made it so we experience a **really low unemployment rate** here. We have low rates of being on DSHS and welfare. We have a lot of job opportunities here, we pay for all of our tribal members to go to college. We pay full tuition, books, travel expenses, and monthly living expenses. We have our own school, a 6-12 program called Chief Kitsap Academy. We also pay for full mental health counseling or substance abuse counseling.”

That last item is especially important. **Heroin addiction** is a significant issue on the reservation. Ramirez said, “In any community that is socioeconomically disadvantaged you have a problem with that. The Nancy Reagan era of “say no to drugs” really didn’t accomplish anything.” Sigo, who worked in behavioral health services for the tribe before becoming a council member, said, “It seems odd to be on this side of it but I was also there to see the most destructive drugs on our reservation. Not just our community, but everywhere across the nation is struggling with heroin, Oxy’s, alcohol, meth, and those kind of hardcore drugs. And so our tribe has really taken a stand against those.”

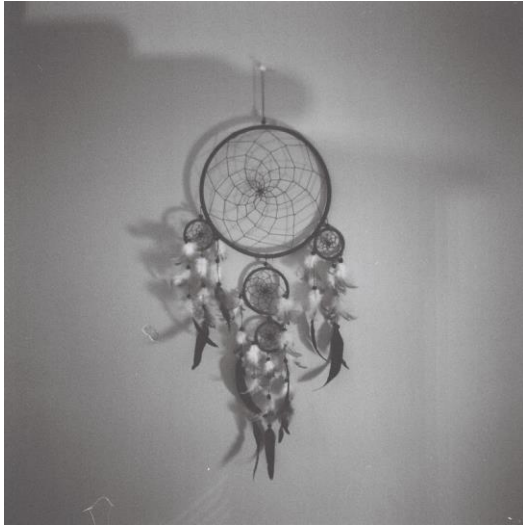
Part of that stand, she said, is “taking more of a **harm-reduction approach** to it, where we’re informing the community, we’re informing kids, and we’re informing families about what can happen if you do [drugs]. ‘Here are the facts about different drugs’ as opposed to ‘Just say no, just say no, just say no.’” It’s fitting that pot, once the target of the war on drugs, is now helping finance programs that might actually win it.

[Agate Dream](#) is located at 15915B State HWY 305 NE in Poulsbo. They're open Monday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to midnight and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestranger.com/blogs/slog/2015/12/08/23245665/washington-states-second-native-american-owned-pot-shop-is-a-big-win-for-tribal-sovereignty>

How Dreamcatchers Went from Sacred Tradition to the Malls of America

09 Dec 2015



Hanging out to catch some dreams. (Photo: [Janis K./flickr](#))

This is part four of a five-part series on sleep and dreams, sponsored by [Oso mattresses](#). Read the others [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

The dreamcatcher, that classic children's craft, hangs from rearview mirrors and earlobes across the United States. The story that's commonly associated with the round hoop strung like a spider's web and festooned with feathers can be conveyed quickly—"You hang it above your bed to catch bad dreams"—and the object holds a wide appeal to sentimental Americans, standing in as part of an apparently usable American Indian past.

I was given a dream catcher as a child, when I had persistent night terrors. Like the Guatemalan worry dolls that showed up in my stocking one year, the small token had the taste of authenticity that soothed an anxious child; if people had been using this method for years, I thought to myself, it must work. It was later that I began to see the object move to a different, more kitschy realm: think airbrushed t-shirts, sold ironically at Urban Outfitters or sincerely at the state fair.

My journey with dreamcatchers is by no means unique: For the past two decades, the object has come to imply wilderness, spirituality, and a certain kind of freedom in mainstream American popular culture. A 1994 Terry C. Johnston [Western novel](#) used the word for its title and the object as a pivotal plot point. In 2003, the title got recycled for [a terrible Stephen King horror movie](#), reaching for a sense of otherworldliness in the Maine woods setting. And in 2009, a dreamcatcher showed up in the *Twilight* movie "New Moon," when the Native American werewolf Jacob gave one to the heroine Bella, who hangs it on her headboard. You can now buy a replica of Jacob's gift [on Amazon for \\$99.50](#).



A whole fleet of dreamcatchers in a small town in Mexico. (Photo: [Son of Groucho/flickr](#))

How did dreamcatchers transform from Native American religious object to revered totem of New Age culture? The story is complicated, and the answers point to the workings of the consumer marketplace, the forces of cultural appropriation, and late-20th-century Native solidarity movements.

The first mention of a dreamcatcher in ethnographic literature came in the early 20th century. In her 1929 book *Chippewa Customs*, self-taught anthropologist and ethnomusicologist [Frances Densmore](#) recorded the results of almost two decades of fieldwork in Minnesota among the Chippewa (who also call themselves Ojibwa, or Ojibwe). In a list of “charms” she recorded, Densmore cited “‘spiderwebs’ hung on the hoop of a cradle board.” These items were three and a half inches in diameter, “filled with an imitation of a spider’s web made of fine yarn, usually dyed red. In old times this netting was made of nettle fiber.” For the Ojibwe, the dreamcatcher was not the only dream-related item to find its place in a child’s space. In this list, Densmore also recorded that those who had named a given child would sometimes create a “miniature representation” of a powerful object that occurred to them in a dream, and hang the item on the child’s cradle-board in order to attract its qualities.

Half a century passed before the dream catcher became one of the objects Americans bought and sold as commercial tokens of sympathy with Native spirituality. Historian of religion Philip Jenkins [writes](#) that over the last 150 years in the U.S., “the mainstream view of Native religions has more or less reversed itself, from a shocked contempt for primitive superstition verging on devil worship, to an envious awe for a holistic spirituality that might be the last best hope for the human race.” Although white Americans “played Indian” before the United States was even formed—as historian Philip Deloria [points out](#), the colonists who dumped tea into the Boston Harbor were dressed as generic “Indians,” symbolically referencing a spirit of rebellious defiance—20th century interest in Native cultures didn’t turn toward spirituality until the 1960s and 1970s.



Let the dreaming begin. (Photo: [Orangefox/pixabay](#))

In those decades, a new passionate investment in Native spirituality—maybe best exemplified by the successful republication of *Black Elk Speaks* (1972) or the publication of Gary Snyder’s *Turtle Island* (1974) —grew among white Americans. While in earlier decades some might have taken an interest in certain Native cultural artifacts—buying Hopi baskets, or building tipis for their children at summer camps—it was only in the New Age 1970s and 1980s that Native ceremonies and practices were tapped into (or, depending on your beliefs, imitated) by white seekers of spiritual truth. Anthropologist Cath Oberholtzer, author of [a book on dreamcatchers](#), [traces](#) the increased commercial popularity of the object to the mid-1980s (right around the time I first encountered a dreamcatcher, as a scared and nervous child). Since that time, the item has been widely sold by both Native and non-Native merchandisers.

How widespread was the use of the dreamcatcher among Native people, before it took on significance as a commercial item? Oberholtzer writes that indigenous people in many areas of North America have recorded traditions of using types of “small netted hoops imbued with inherent symbolic protection” as tokens meant to insure well-being. Sometimes this round object was not a catcher of nighttime dreams, but a “miniature netted shield,” used to attract protective spirits and defend from malevolent ones. In the beliefs of some tribes, the netting in these objects was meant to symbolize a spider web, which had the power to catch and frustrate evil in its sticky thread. According to anthropological records, the East Cree used a charm similar to the Ojibwa dream-catcher to forestall bad dreams, but Oberholzer found no record of pre-1970s use in ethnographies of other tribes, like the Micmac or Iroquois.

Nonetheless, many tribes now claim some form of the dreamcatcher legend as their own, and sell variations on the objects and their legends to consumers. Oberholtzer suggests that tribes inspired by the pan-Indian movement of the 1960s and 1970s may have adopted the dream-catcher as an icon of solidarity, finding common cause in the popular object that harks back to the many symbolic uses of a round, webbed hoop.

Direct Link: <http://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/how-dreamcatchers-went-from-sacred-tradition-to-the-malls-of-america>

John Trudell Has Died

Trudell, American Indian activist, poet and actor, is dead at 69.



This 1971 file photo shows John Trudell, then a 25-year-old member of the Alcatraz tribal council, talking to newsmen after a band of Indians occupied a remote former Nike site near Richmond, Calif.

Associated Press Dec. 8, 2015 | 7:50 p.m. EST + More

By ROBERT JABLON, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — John Trudell, who was a spokesman for American Indian protesters during their 1969 occupation of Alcatraz Island and later headed the American Indian Movement, died Tuesday. He was 69.

Trudell, who also was a poet and actor, died of cancer at his home in Santa Clara County in Northern California, where he was surrounded by friends and family, said Cree Miller, a trustee for his estate.

In some of his last words, Trudell said expressions of concern and love for him have been "like a fire to my heart," according to Miller.

"Thank you all for that fire," he said.

"John Trudell and his family ask for people to celebrate love and celebrate life. He asked that people pray and celebrate in their own way in their own communities," Miller said in a statement.

Trudell was born Feb. 15, 1946, in Omaha, Nebraska. His father was Santee Sioux, and Trudell grew up near the Santee Sioux Reservation.

He became involved in Native American activism after a stint in the U.S. Navy, serving in a destroyer off the Vietnamese coast.

In 1969, Trudell joined American Indians who had occupied Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay to demand that the former federal prison should be given to Native Americans under treaty rights.

Trudell, who studied radio and broadcasting at a college in San Bernardino, California, became spokesman for the group that called itself the United Indians of All Tribes, and he ran a radio broadcast from the island called Radio Free Alcatraz.

The protest eventually dwindled, and the last demonstrators were removed by federal officers after 19 months.

Trudell went on to serve as national chairman of the activist American Indian Movement from 1973 to 1979.

In 1979, while Trudell was demonstrating in Washington, D.C., his pregnant second wife, Tina Manning, three children and mother-in-law were killed in a fire at her parents' home on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation in Nevada.

Trudell and others long suspected government involvement, but the cause of the fire was never determined.

Trudell later had a relationship with Marcheline Bertrand, the mother of actress Angelina Jolie, before her 2007 death from cancer. She was an executive producer of a 2005 documentary about him called "Trudell."

Trudell was a prolific poet, combining spoken words and music on more than a dozen albums, including one released earlier this year.

His fans included Kris Kristofferson, who paid tribute to Trudell with the 1995 song "Johnny Lobo," a tune Kristofferson still frequently performs live.

Trudell also acted in several movies, including 1992's "Thunderheart" starring Val Kilmer and 1998's "Smoke Signals" starring Adam Beach.

In 2012, Trudell and singer Willie Nelson co-founded Hempstead Project Heart, which advocates for legalizing the growing of hemp for industrial purposes as a more environmentally sound alternative to crops used for clothing, biofuel and food.

Direct Link: <http://www.usnews.com/news/entertainment/articles/2015/12/08/american-indian-activist-poet-john-trudell-dies-at-69>

Indigenous Peoples' Caucus Focuses on Setbacks at COP21 as Agreement Moves to Final Negotiations

[Terri Hansen](#)

12/9/15

Indigenous Peoples lobbied participating countries at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP21) in Paris to adopt a strong human rights approach and take into consideration their special vulnerabilities to climate change impacts as well as their valuable contributions to adaptation and mitigation strategies.

In particular the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC) asked that “respect for human rights, including the rights of Indigenous Peoples in climate change policies and actions” be integrated into both the preamble of the Paris Agreement, which sets the framework for interpreting and implementing all the operative provisions, and the legally binding operative section.

Representatives of the Indigenous Peoples' Caucus sprang into defensive action on December 3 after Norway, backed by the United States, Australia and some European countries, added brackets around wording that referenced Indigenous Peoples' rights in the preamble and in Article 2.2 of the operative draft Paris Climate Agreement text. Bracketing a letter, word or section opens it up for further discussion, and thus potential change.

Also bracketed was the “s” in Indigenous People[s]. The following day, inside the conference, indigenous representatives held up individual letters that together spelled out WE ARE PEOPLES. Outside the venue, Indigenous Peoples from diverse countries united in demonstrations to show their opposition to the proposed changes.

“That is unreasonable for us,” Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, a pastoralist from Chad, Africa, and co-chair of the IIPFCC to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), told ICTMN. “We do not understand why a country like Norway, who is supporting Indigenous Peoples' preparation and participation to the COP21, reacted as that. The U.S. as well.”

Such sentiments were echoed by other conference participants, including U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, who said that taking out references to indigenous human rights in key sections of the agreement could impair forest preservation that is founded on traditional knowledge.

“Failure to protect indigenous peoples' rights in a final agreement will fuel destruction of the forests and other ecosystems managed since time immemorial by indigenous

peoples,” Tauli-Corpuz said in a statement. “This will weaken the contributions of indigenous peoples to the solutions to climate change.”

Reuters [reported](#) that Norway and the other countries were concerned that including human rights protections in the operational text—the binding part of the agreement—could create some form of legal liability if climate change is judged to have violated those rights. The entire Article 2.2 in the [Draft Paris Outcome](#) published by the UNFCCC on December 5 is now bracketed, and the text has moved to the ministerial level for final negotiations.

“This language has been bracketed, removed, put back, changed, put back,” Frank Ettawageshik (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians), representing the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) as a participant of the Indigenous Caucus, told ICTMN.

Andrea Carmen (Yaqui Nation of Arizona), executive director of the International Indigenous Treaty Council, a Global Steering Committee partner to the IIPFCC, told ICTMN that matters had changed “several times a day” with regards to Indigenous Peoples’ rights in the Paris Climate Agreement.

“Canada called for reinserting Indigenous Peoples in the operative 2.2 paragraph,” Carmen said. “It had a huge impact. We’ve seen a growing number of States willing to support that.”

Because the Indigenous Peoples’ Caucus has observer status to the UNFCCC, its representatives can lobby delegates at the COP and at inter-sessional meetings, which they did throughout the days and late into the nights.

“Should human rights for indigenous peoples be struck from the final agreement, negotiators will have destroyed any pretense of their intention to mitigate climate change,” said Tauli-Corpuz. “If our rights are violated, we will be unable to protect the forests. This is the direct link between human rights and climate change.”

Carmen said tribal leaders and indigenous representatives met with U.S. government representative Andrew Light, a staff climate adviser in the U.S. Department of State as well as a consultant for the State Department at COP21. Light assured them from the very top, President Barack Obama, that Indigenous Peoples’ rights would be included in the text.

“They’re vague about placement,” Carmen said. “They don’t really want it in the operative; they would rather have it in the preamble. We would like it in both.”

Indigenous Peoples have commitments from a growing number of countries (known as State Parties in COP21 parlance) to propose inclusion of the rights of Indigenous Peoples in operative paragraph two on Human Rights, including Mexico, Peru, Nicaragua,

Guatemala, the Philippines and Canada, as well as several Pacific island states, Carmen said.

As of December 6, the words “rights of Indigenous Peoples” appeared without brackets in pre-ambular paragraph 10. Carmen said the basis of their work in the summit’s second week will be to continue to work for the term’s inclusion in the operative section.

Also under Article 2 of the draft Paris agreement is holding the “increase in the global average temperature to [below 1.5°C] [or] [well below 2°C] above pre-industrial levels by ensuring deep reductions in global greenhouse gas [net] emissions.” Because of the disastrous effects climate disruption has already had on Indigenous Peoples, the IIPFCC proposed that warming be kept to no more than 1.5°C above preindustrial levels.

The IIPFCC won’t know until next week how the final Paris Climate Agreement will read. The goal of the COP21 is to adopt, by December 11, an international, legally binding climate agreement under the convention in the form of a protocol that is applicable to all parties.

“Basically we’ve been kicking the can down the road,” said NCAI’s Ettawageshik. “Had we taken action earlier we wouldn’t have to take such drastic action now. We’re running out of road to kick the can down.”

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/12/09/indigenous-peoples-caucus-focuses-setbacks-cop21-agreement-moves-final-negotiations>

First World Indigenous Games Bring Tribal Colleges and Students to Brazil

[Christina Rose](#)

12/9/15

Fireworks and a fire ceremony heralded the opening events of the first World Indigenous Games, held in Palmas, Brazil from October 23 to November 1. More than 1,800 indigenous people from 23 countries filled the arena and thousands of visitors filled the stands. The event was even attended by Brazil’s President Dilma Rousseff. With 22 tribal nations from Brazil alone, indigenous people from Siberia, Finland, Ethiopia, Mongolia, New Zealand, and many other countries, joined Natives from North, South, and Central Americas.

Tribal college students from Little Big Horn College, Chief Dull Knife College, Little Priest Tribal College, and Navajo Technical University made up the United States team, which was joined by athletes from Canada and New Zealand.

Navajo Technical University student Dwight Carlston, Navajo, recalled the opening ceremonies: “It began with all the tribes lined up outside the arena. The announcer spoke Portuguese and the crowd was loud.” One by one, as each tribal nation entered the arena, “They were singing their songs and doing their dances, things I’d never seen before. It kind of made me excited and nervous. They had this huge light show and a spotlight, and the crowds were cheering. There were so many people. I have never been through anything like that before.”



Indians from various ethnic groups and countries dance during the opening ceremony of the World Indigenous Games, in Palmas, Brazil, Friday, October 23, 2015. Billed as the indigenous Olympics, the games attracted athletes from dozens of Brazilian ethnicities, as well as from such nations as Ethiopia and New Zealand. (AP Photo/Eraldo Peres)

“It was fantastic! You had to be there to feel the electricity,” said Dr. David Yarlott, President of Little Big Horn College and a member of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium’s athletic commission. Planning for the World Indigenous Games began two years ago with Brazilian Marcos Terena, who organized the games.

Video of A rocky start of the first World Indigenous Games

Tribal college students and staff applied and were selected through AIHEC. The original goal to send 50 U.S. representatives fell short due to cost and the lack of available passports and visas, but for the 11 who went, it was a life changing experience.

The sports events were indigenous based: archery; spear throwing (or javelin); a 100 meter race; a barefoot race, run on sand; an 8,400 Meter Cross Country race; swimming (in the river); canoeing; and a tug of war between nations.

Several tribes gave demonstrations of their own sports, including a blow gun competition, a men’s 200-pound log carry, and the women’s 135-pound log carry. “There was head ball, where they’d dive at the ball and hit it with their heads to advance it, and the Mexicans had a form of hockey with a burning ball. The only Western sport was soccer,” Yarlott said.

Video of I Jogos Mundiais dos Povos Indígenas (JMPI)

A copy0,000 grant from the American Indian College Fund partially funded the trip. “We were so honored to be able to support tribal college students and staff attending the World Indigenous Games. Our students are engaged with their communities in the restoration of traditional knowledge and the World Games inspired them to continue that engagement. It was good for our students and staff to see that we have many indigenous relatives that join us,” College Fund president Cheryl Crazy Bull said.

Ken Deputee and Aldean Good Luck, both Crow, attended as athletes and coaches through Little Big Horn College. Both visited with the Baikiri Nation in a village constructed for the games. “They wanted to know about us: Where are you from? How big is your tribe? Do you have your language, your culture, your traditions? The time flew by. They were very welcoming and respectful and there were a lot of gifts exchanged,” Deputee said.



Brazilian Canela men take part in a race carrying logs during the first day of competitions of the World Indigenous Games, in Palmas, Brazil, Saturday, October 24, 2015. (AP Photo/Eraldo Peres)

Deputee was told the Brazilian nations were unaware there were so many indigenous people in the world. “Brazil has almost 240 indigenous nations. It was cool to see how excited they were about the number of indigenous people in the U.S. and Canada. We share similar cultures and relationships. They liked the eagle feathers and they were coming up to us and touching our beadwork.”

Culture shock hit Good Luck the first day she arrived. “The weather was so hot, and the airport was small and seeing all the trees!” During the trip she was able to see waterfalls and walk on forest trails.

The opening ceremonies gave Good Luck a sense of belonging. “This was history in the making,” she said. Good Luck participated in the Tug of War. “We won the first round. The excitement and the adrenaline, just to be part of that it was awesome,” she said.



Participants from the United States perform during the opening ceremony of the World Indigenous Games in Palmas, Brazil, Friday, October 23, 2015. (AP Photo/Eraldo Peres)

Former Little Big Horn student Elvis Old Bull Jr. placed fourth in the javelin competition.

From the food to the people, Felicia Chischilly, 29, information technology student at Navajo Technical University, said the experience was “really different and really great.” She compared the games to the Gathering of Nations Pow Wow, New Mexico, with different dress and language. “On the reservation, I am used to hearing Navajo. Communicating with people at the games was like going back to the old days and having to use sign language,” she said.

Besides the unexpectedly humid 103-degree weather, the students were faced with another challenge. “We stayed in a school that had been turned into a dorm with little wooden beds and thin mattresses. But the Americans were taller and some broke the beds when they sat on them,” Chischilly giggled.

Each morning, the Amazon nations sang for their breakfast, a daily highlight for Chischilly. “People are beautiful in different ways, despite where they come from. You can’t judge them by how they eat or live, wherever you go or whoever you meet,” she said. “Going into someone’s home and respecting who they are, it really opened my eyes to that. It made me think about the kind of person I really am, inside and out.”



A participant from the United States takes part in the bow and arrow competition at the World Indigenous Games, in Palmas, Brazil, Monday, October 26, 2015. (AP Photo/Eraldo Peres)

The students were told not to drink the water or eat food offered to them, but Chischilly felt that to deny them would have been disrespectful. “So me and a couple of my friends ate the food and drank the water, and we were really thankful for the offer. They taught me a lot about living off the land. Natives in the U.S. live so much more in the modern world. We don’t realize how good we have it compared to the Natives in Brazil. It made me appreciate what I have,” Chischilly said.

The games will be held again in two years in Canada. “It was amazing,” Yarlott said. “The hospitality, the warmth, the welcome—there were some language barriers, but the smiles more than made up for all the differences.” Discussions about student exchange programs with Brazil have begun.

When Chischilly returned to her reservation, a handful of little girls told her how her travel and participation in the games inspired them. Chischilly was moved by that and said, “I didn’t realize how much that trip would influence the younger generation. Now I have to watch what I do and where I go. It made me cry, and it really inspired me.”

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/12/09/first-world-indigenous-games-bring-tribal-colleges-and-students-brazil-162690>